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All your Apple needs

Mac FORMAT

ISSUE 197 July 2008

THE 3G iPHONE IS HERE + HOW TO GET IT FREE!

All the latest news on page 7

The Ultimate Mac Survival Guide

Essential hints, tips and kit for your iLife apps, mobile Macs, design & music

MACFORMAT ESSENTIALS

3 PAGES OF HELP & ADVICE
Everything a Mac owner needs!

Improving your DVDs
Burn DVDs with chapter markers

Fix colours in photos
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New reviews this issue
Canon Selphy ES2
Ar4 Duo • Toon Boom
Studio 4 • OpenOffice.org

TESTED

Digital delights
The best sub-£150 digicams

REVIEWED

Brand new iMac
Our verdict on Apple's latest

REVEALED

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Save £100s on your next Mac

DVD INSIDE!
- Turn your photos into art with Citra FX 2.0
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Welcome

Here in the UK we're used to getting shafted when it comes to pricing compared to our US cousins. The trend to do a dollar-to-pound conversion by just swapping the dollar sign for a pound sign is all too prevalent, but every so often the gods seem to shine on us. Rejoice UK iPhone owners, because with the new 3G iPhone that time has come again! Here's why:

"We get free upgrades to the iPhone 3G if we're on the £45 or £75 price plan"

First, at least on the surface, we're getting a proper dollar-to-pound conversion. iPhone 3G is $199 in the US and £99 in the UK. Hurrah!

Second, we get free upgrades to the new iPhone 3G if we're on the £45 or £75 price plan. We also get to keep our old iPhone, whereas our US cousins have to exchange theirs. And finally, with AT&T in the US the contract is going up by $10; here, O2 has kept the existing contracts the same, and even added a cheaper £30 tariff. It's not great value (125 texts and 75 minutes vs 500 texts and 600 minutes on the £35 tariff), but it's good to have the option.

Even if you don't upgrade to the new iPhone there's still reason to celebrate. The new iPhone apps are going to open up a world of possibilities for every iPhone user. Plus the new MobileMe service will replace Apple's .Mac. As well as giving all the web apps a lick of paint it's going to take syncing your contacts and calendar information to the next level. So when you update a contact on your iPhone, for instance, it will also automatically update on all your Macs wirelessly. And at £59 Apple has reduced its pricing (this information came in too late to make it into our *iLife* feature on p29, so ignore the pricing info there).

It's going to be an exciting few months for iPhone and Mac owners. Enjoy the issue and I'll see you on 23 July for more from the world of Apple.

email: gbarlow@futurenet.co.uk

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All your Apple needs

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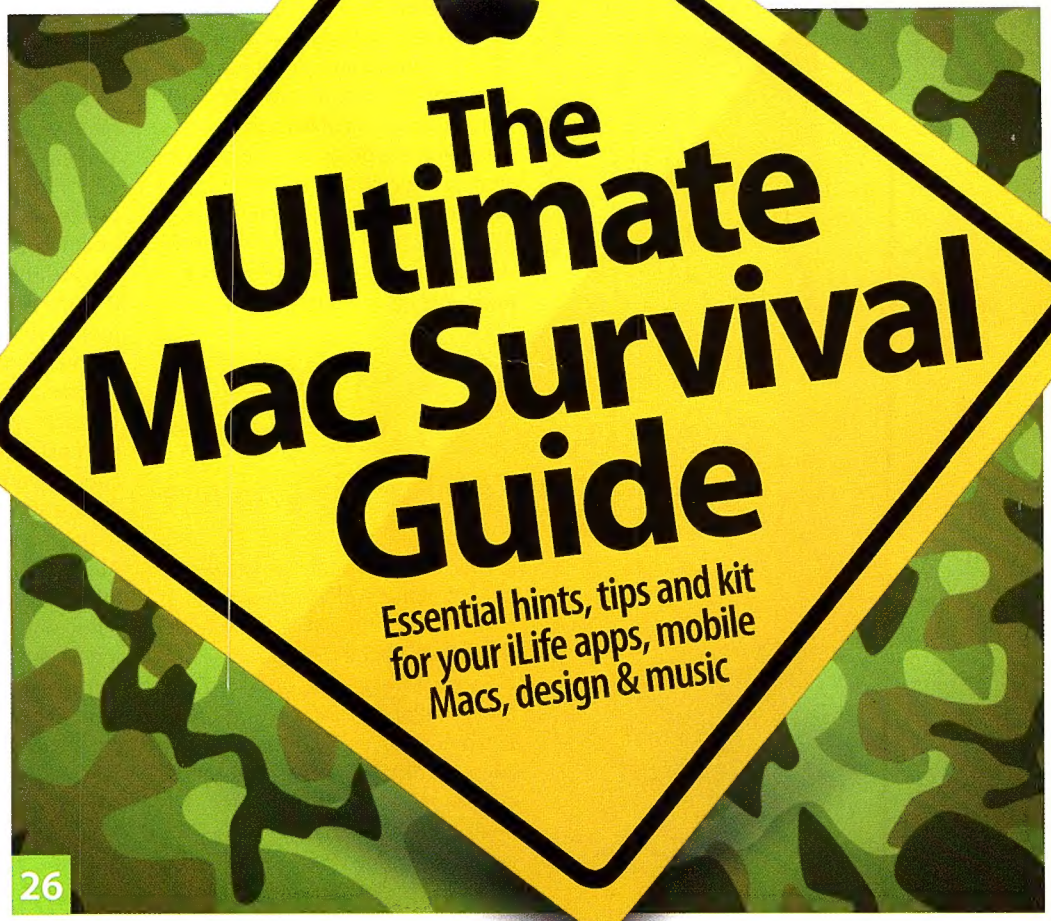
Top tips on Apple's office suite



The Ultimate Mac Survival Guide

Essential hints, tips and kit for your iLife apps, mobile Macs, design & music

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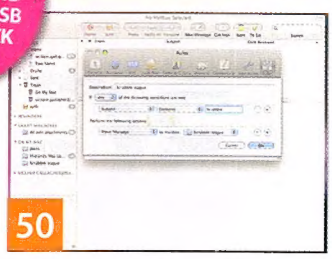

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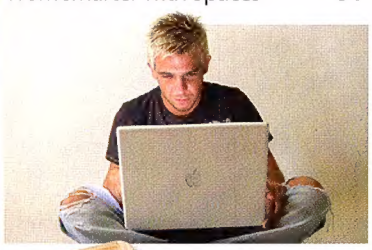

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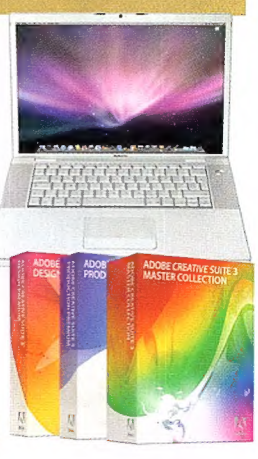

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Start-up

With fingers firmly on the Mac's pulse, MacFormat brings you all the best Apple chat

iPhone 3G is here!

Apple has announced the iPhone 3G that will ship in 22 countries on 11 July

Apple talked iPhone at WWDC 2008 on 9 June. CEO Steve Jobs began saying, "Let's get started. There's three parts to Apple now: the first part is the Mac, the second part's the music business, iPod and iTunes, the third part is the iPhone."

The iPhone 3G delivers on the hype, ships with *iPhone 2.0* software, and is accompanied by major improvements to .Mac, now rebranded MobileMe.

"Just one year after launching the iPhone, we're launching the new iPhone 3G that is twice as fast at half the price," said Jobs. "iPhone 3G supports Microsoft Exchange ActiveSync right out of the box, runs the incredible third-party apps created with the iPhone SDK, and will be available in more than 70 countries around the world this year."

More speed, less cost

Cheaper, thinner and faster, iPhone 3G offers data access up to twice the speed of EDGE. It hosts built-in GPS for expanded location-based mobile services, and will ship in 22 countries on July 11, reaching 70 by the end of the year, Apple said.

UK pricing, set by O2, is competitive. On the new £30 and the existing £35 tariffs, the 8GB model costs £99 and the 16GB model is £159; the device is free on the £45 and £75 tafiffs. Existing iPhone owners on the £35 tariff can upgrade to the new model for £99/£159 depending on capacity, while £45 and £75 a month customers get the new phone free. You get to keep your old iPhone.

iPhone 3G supports quad-band GSM and tri-band HSDPA for voice and data calls. It also supports WiFi, 3G and EDGE and automatically switches between them to ensure the fastest possible downloads. Users can simultaneously browse the web, get directions and check email while on a call.

> "Just one year after launching the iPhone, we're launching the iPhone 3G that is twice as fast at half the price"

All users benefit from enterprise class features, including Microsoft Exchange ActiveSync support. It offers ten hours of talktime on 2G networks and five hours using 3G, with up to six hours of web browsing, up to seven hours' video playback and up to 24 hours for audio playback.

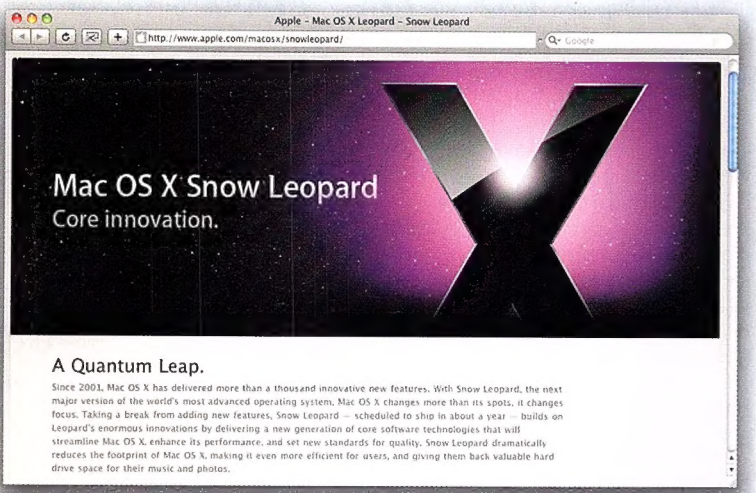
It runs using *iPhone 2.0* software, available in early July for existing iPhone users, for whom it's a free upgrade. iPod touch owners can purchase and install the software for $9.95 (£5).

SNIPPETS

iPhone revenue

Many of the operators in the 70 countries set to ship iPhone 3G this year will not be sharing customer revenues with Apple, which confirmed non-exclusive multi-year deals with most operators, bar those in the US, UK, France, Germany, Spain, Ireland and other countries. Apple won't take a share of customer revenue from carriers for most of the deals.

NEW OS | Snow Leopard in the shadows



Apple quietly discussed 'Snow Leopard', its next OS X upgrade which it expects to ship in "one year". It appears to be an attempt at future-proofing, lending speed and stability improvements, support for 64-bit computing and 16TB memory support.

Apple's Senior Vice President of Software Engineering, Bertrand Serlet, said: "We have delivered more than a thousand new features to OS X in just seven years and Snow Leopard lays the foundation for thousands more. In our continued effort to deliver the best user experience, we hit the pause button on new features to focus on perfecting the world's most advanced operating system."

For developers, the new OS is expected to offer a unified environment for developing for all Apple platforms, but may abandon support for PowerPCs.

Additional features include the ability to mass move and delete multiple email messages, search for contacts, a new scientific calculator, parental controls, save images directly from a web page or email them to your iPhone and transfer them back to your photo library on a Mac or PC.

The company confirmed 35% of the Fortune 500 companies are developing iPhone applications, including six of seven leading airlines and the top five US banks.

Inclusion of GPS support ushers in true location-based services, allowing users to track where they are on a Google Map and it opens up other new opportunities for developers. Developers can build apps using all the software and hardware features, including the movement sensors.

Applications will be made available through the App Store, which works over mobile networks (for applications up to 10MB) and WiFi, so users will be able to purchase, install and use applications wirelessly. Many applications will be free and the store will be made available in 62 countries at launch, using the as-yet unreleased *iTunes 7.7*.

With so much power, it's no surprise developers are flocking to build applications for iPhone, which some analysts expect will sell 14 million units by the end of the year. AOL, Cisco, eBay, Electronic Arts, Epocrates, TypePad, Salesforce.com and Sega all demonstrated impressive native applications developed using the iPhone SDK at WWDC. A number of games will exploit the product's built-in movement detectors as control interfaces.

Apple in numbers

250,000

Developers downloading the iPhone SDK beta within 95 days

MobileMe replaces .Mac

iPhone 3G integrates with MobileMe, the much-improved version of .Mac, which pushes email, contacts and calendars from an online 'cloud' to native applications on iPhone, iPod touch, Macs and PCs. This means email messages are pushed instantly to all your devices, removing the need to manually check email and wait for downloads, plus it keeps contacts and calendars continuously up to date so changes made on one device are automatically updated on others. It also allows you to take a photo and post it directly to a MobileMe Gallery to share.

The impact of Apple's iPhone news immediately prompted ABI Research mobile analyst Kevin Burden to note: "It has been challenging for competitors to deliver products that rise to the expectations the iPhone is creating, without appearing to chase the innovations of a vendor that holds less than half a percent of the worldwide mobile phone market... the iPhone is one of those rare, disruptive pieces of technology that first raised the bar for consumer-oriented smartphones and is now looking to meet the expectations of enterprise users."

DIALOGUE BOX

What they're saying about Apple

STEVE JOBS AT WWDC www.apple.com

"As we arrive at iPhone's first birthday, we're going to take it to the next level, and today we're going to introduce iPhone 3G. We've learned so much with the first iPhone, we've taken everything we learned and more, and created the iPhone 3G, and it's beautiful."

The Apple CEO talks the talk to launch iPhone 3G.

TIME ON STEVE JOBS www.time.com

"Jobs may be a celebrity CEO, but he doesn't jump out of airplanes or traipse around Africa with bundles of cash. He is always in character and always on message. Jobs gets called mercurial, egomaniacal, a micromanager. If that sounds a little like a CEO doing his job, maybe that's because he is – and a mighty fine one."

Time on Jobs in latest top 100 list of the world's most influential people.

JONATHAN IVE http://tinyurl.com/576f2

"Ultimately there is something motivating and inspiring in seeing someone using an Apple product and enjoying an Apple product."

Apple Senior Vice President of Industrial Design, speaks to *The Independent* on Apple's D&AD two coveted Black Pencil wins (see snippet on page 8).

iPHONE DEVELOPERS ON iPHONE http://tinyurl.com/5cwt64

"Everyone who plays with one wants one, and that alone puts it far ahead of any of the Windows Mobile devices or Nokia smartphones on the market."

iPhone developers on porting *Doom* to the iPhone.

STEPHEN WALDIS www.synchronoss.com

"The gap between the number of iPhones expected to be sold and the actual number that we are activating continues to be significant."

Synchronoss Technologies explains iPhone unlocking threatens to cut $30 million from its earnings in 2008.

JOHN VAN DER BURG www.mysticgd.com

"The Mac platform is getting more and more market share as well as the Mac gaming sector growing stronger."

MysticGD explains its release of EMotion FX games development engine.

Let us know if you've heard any good Apple quotes this month. Email them to macformat@futurenet.co.uk

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iTUNES MOVIES AND TV

UK iTunes goes to the movies

iTunes Store offers movie downloads and rentals and more TV channels

Apple has finally added movies to the UK iTunes Store. The company sneakily added the catalogue of 700 movies on 4 June, with titles including *I am Legend*, *Matrix* and *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*.

"We're kicking off movies on the iTunes Store in the UK with over 700 films for purchase and rent", said Eddy Cue, Apple's Vice President of *iTunes*. "We think customers in the UK are going to love being able to enjoy their favorite movies on their iPod, iPhone or on a widescreen TV with Apple TV".

Rentals start from just £2.49 for library titles and £3.49 for new releases. The rented movie will be available to watch for 30 days, or 24 hours once you start playing it. Movie purchases start from £6.99 for library titles and new releases will be £10.99.

As well as movies, the UK iTunes Store now offers over 16 TV channels, with shows from Universal, HIT Entertainment and Sony Pictures made available.

Purchase prices of TV shows vary between £1.19 and £1.89 per episode – a break in Apple's usual fixed-price policy.

Finally! Movies are available to rent and buy on the UK iTunes Store!

CREATIVE PROS

Adobe previews Creative Suite 4

Developer trials of Dreamweaver, Fireworks, Soundbooth and more

Adobe has introduced free working betas of future versions of *Dreamweaver*, *Fireworks* and *Soundbooth*. Users can employ the software for just 48 hours, though *Creative Suite 3* owners can use them until the next version of the suite ships by providing a valid serial number. Available from Adobe Labs (**www.labs.adobe.com**), Adobe says the apps illustrate the simplified workflow that it has been working on for *CS4*.

Dreamweaver offers new Related Files Toolbar and Code Navigator features to help developers manage complex pages. Code Navigator allows them to implement changes to code that appears in various parts of a document in one move. Users also gain a WebKit-generated preview function. The company has also discontinued *GoLive* in order to focus on *Dreamweaver*, following its acquisition of Macromedia in late 2005. Adobe will offer free *GoLive* phone support until 28 October 2008, maintaining online support after this.

Fireworks gains a user interface that's consistent with Adobe's other creative apps. Users can export designs as PDFs and it's compatible with Adobe *AIR*, *Flash*, *Flex Builder* and HTML. *Soundbooth* offers many audio production tools, including new support for multiple tracks so users can edit clips in multiple songs or versions in one swoop.

Adobe's forthcoming release of *Creative Suite* will have a simplified workflow.

Adobe is also offering a pre-release beta of *Flash Player 10* and accompanying creative application, *Pixel Bender*. *Flash* now offers support for custom filters and effects, native 3D animations and GPU hardware acceleration. The software also supports variable bit rates for video streams.

SNIPPETS

D&AD Black Pencils
Apple excelled at the world's leading creative industry awards (D&AD), winning two Black Pencils (the top prize) for its iMac and iPhone. These highly coveted awards are only granted when products meet strictly enforced criteria – in the award's 45 years, six years have seen no Black Pencils awarded at all.

Elgato upgrade
Elgato has upgraded the Turbo.264's software, adding integrated YouTube clip encoding/upload and preservation of Dolby Digital audio for surround sound speakers and Apple TV. The update is available for free and adds *iMovie* compatibility. Numerous bug fixes have also been made to the company's £70 hardware encoder for video.

Apple's growing range of retail stores have helped the company generate market share gains.

MAC MARKET

The Mac is back

Apple's Mac sales continue to outgrow the PC market

Apple is no longer a niche PC-market player, with Mac sales climbing 50% in the US in April according to NPD Group research. That growth exceeds the overall PC industry average of 17%, Lehman Brothers analyst Ben Reitzes said (referring to NPD's figures), noting Apple's Mac revenues also climbed 48%.

It's not just that Apple's beating industry growth in every quarter that signals the company's success – NPD also notes that 66% of laptops sold in the US that cost $1,000 or more are made by Apple, meaning the company is picking up serious purchases by customers determined to switch to Mac. (50% of Macs sold in Apple retail stores go to shoppers new to the platform).

"In notebooks they're growing two times the market," Stephen Baker, NPD's Vice President of Industry Analysis, told eWeek. "Windows notebooks are pretty much flat right now." Windows laptop sales saw no growth in the first quarter, while Apple saw 50-60% growth, the analyst said. Apple's desktop sales are up 45%, according to NPD, prompting Baker to claim: "iMacs are growing and the Windows desktop ain't. No matter how you look at it, Apple is outperforming Windows."

Apple in numbers

$19.4 billion

Apple's cash balance, up $13.9 billion in four years. What's it for?

The analyst attributes much of this growth to the continued success of Apple's retail stores, which are making a Mac easier to find, try out and purchase than ever before.

These are just the latest in a salvo of market stats which confirm the Mac is back. Apple sold 2.29 million Macs in Q2, 1.433 million of which were laptops, laptop sales climbed 61% year-on-year.

The company's continued market share gains caused Apple CEO Steve Jobs to say last October: "Are we headed for a tipping point? It sometimes feels like that." Watch this space for updates.

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iPhone 3G... Now you're talking!

Brad thinks patience in waiting is a virtue... for everyone

ACROSS THE POND...

I'm proud of myself. I fought the urge and won for eight months as my friends waved their first-generation iPhone's in my face. For that my come-uppance will be duly rewarded with a cheaper and better iPhone.

Here is iPhone 3G: cheaper, sleeker, faster. Now you're talking, Apple!

Thank you for the GPS capability and then leaving The Cloud WiFi capability as part of the package. Thanks for throwing in MobileMe – which lets me share email, contacts and calendars between my Macs and iPhone seamlessly – for no additional fee, because I am already a .Mac subscriber.

Thanks for the beefier *iPhone 2.0* software that gives me Microsoft *Office* support and *PowerPoint* presentation viewing. Oh, and finally, thanks for rolling out the new iPhone at the same time in the UK as the US, and not making me wait five months.

Yes, there's stuff missing we all salivated for. No higher megapixel camera, no ability to capture video with the camera, no FM radio, no physical buttons for audio and video playback, no ability to turn the iPhone into a modem, no *Flash* support, no way to send SMS messages to multiple parties and no voice note or voice dialling capabilities.

> "With its new and more complete features, the lower prices make this a sweet deal that will push many a first-gen iPhone looker into a buyer"

But let's be fair, with its new and more complete features – together with the App Store – the lower prices make this a sweet deal that will push many a first-generation iPhone doubter into a buyer. It's a good solid upgrade and dropping the price by half will make it accessible to a whole new class of customers. And that's what Apple and its carrier 02 are hoping for.

Not a bad strategy when you realise the iPhone is now in line with the price of many of its competitors' medium-range phones. If Nokia, Blackberry, Sony Ericsson, LG and others were worried before, they will have many sleepless nights to come.

So off I go to buy my iPhone 3G along with millions of others. It's got me (and my £35 a month for 18 months) written all over it.

Brad Gibson is the producer and host of the *MacFormat This Week* podcast. Download it via *iTunes* or from www.macformat.co.uk.

PRO DESIGN

QuarkXPress 8 to ship soon

Quark promises the DTP standard will ship by the end of July

QuarkXPress 8 will ship in the UK from July, and is packed with new features and workflow improvements. Quark is also offering those purchasing *XPress 7* a free upgrade to v8 when it ships.

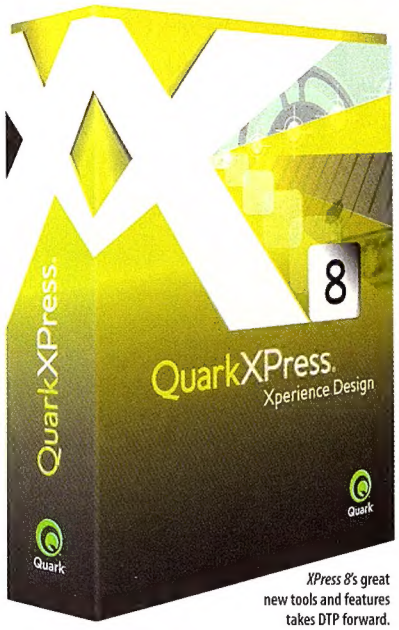
Quark's Tim Banister, General Manager of Desktop Technology, explains: "We have combined highly intuitive software with the design control elements that are critical in the creative process, and as a result believe QuarkXPress 8 will not only be a seamless upgrade for existing users, but the most accessible professional page-layout software for new users to learn as well."

The user interface is improved, as are web and *Flash* authoring tools. The typography and global publishing options now let you save documents as PDF, EPS, SWF and HTML.

New tools include a Picture Content Tool to grab, rotate and scale images in real-time; the Item and Text Content Tools integrate together far better; while a new Bézier pen tool lets users draw illustrations.

Designers will welcome the improved drag-and-drop support, for taking text and images from the Desktop and a host of apps, such as *iPhoto*, Adobe *Bridge*, *Photoshop* and Microsoft *Word* directly into documents they're working on.

XPress 8 uniquely supports hanging characters with paragraph-by-paragraph control, multiple presets and the ability to export character settings. *XPress 8*'s global file format supports advanced Eastern and Western typography for more than 30 languages, so the repurposing of content within the same essential layout is easier. Also available, QuarkXPress 8 Plus offers tools for formatting East Asian text, including local fonts, character-spacing tools, and more.



XPress 8's great new tools and features takes DTP forward.

Apple in numbers

10

Percentage of BBC *iPlayer* streams that go to Macs

STOCK WATCH

We keep our eyes peeled for Apple's market share

Clem Chambers is CEO of stocks and investment website ADVFN. For free real-time stock prices go to: www.advfn.com Email: clemcham@advfn.com

Since mid-March the NASDAQ has increased an impressive 14%. But in the same period Apple stock has seen its share price rise by 47.5%. Buyers during March's massive dip are no doubt rejoicing. Yet we are entrenched in a Bear market; does Apple's current price of $187 signal a double top, will it come down as spectacularly as it has risen, or is it about to buck the overall market trend and break into new territory?

Bad news for Apple is that it looks like sales of the iPhone are petering out. Jobs predicted at last year's Macworld Conference that 10 million units would be sold in 2008. But just 1.7 million were sold in the first quarter. Analysts are wary and think 8.3 million for the remainder of the year is out of reach. Disappointment on this front and a couple of analyst downgrades could put a big dent in the share price. However, rumours are rife that Apple is planning a solar-powered iPhone, which could open up a new buying market for the environmentally conscious. Perhaps this could boost sales...

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Win! A MacBook and Vodafone USB Modem Stick

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WORTH MORE THAN £700 IN TOTAL

This month, *MacFormat* has teamed up with Vodafone to offer one lucky reader a brand new MacBook *and* Vodafone USB Modem Stick. The prize does not include a data package, but these are fairly cheap to pick up these days and you will probably want to shop around. They cost anything between £15 and £25 per month, depending on your bandwidth needs.

What impressed us about the Vodafone USB Modem Stick, aside from the Vodafone service that we have used for years now, is the compact, elegant design and reliable reception. It slips into a side pocket in a laptop bag with no bother at all, and can be trusted on the road, whether you're in the UK or roaming further afield.

Once configured, you can initiate a new connection in seconds. When connected, it smoothly steps the speed up and down depending on the best-quality connection available in your location.

The main appeal, though, is the convenience. Whether you need to get in a last-minute bid on an eBay item, or keep your email inbox up to date, it's an incredibly useful bit of kit that's also Mac friendly.

HOW TO ENTER

For your chance to win a gorgeous MacBook and USB Modem Stick, answer this question:

At the time of writing, what is the cheapest monthly contract on offer for the USB Modem Stick?

a) £10
b) £15
c) £20

Terms & conditions

- To enter the *MacFormat* Vodafone competition, you can either (a) text your answer to 87474, or (b) enter via our website by going to www.macformat.co.uk and clicking on the **Competition** link.
- By sending your entry, you agree to these competition rules and you confirm you are happy to receive details of future offers and promotions from Future Publishing Limited and carefully selected third parties.
- If you do not want to receive information relating to future offers and promotions, please include the word STOP at the end of your text message.
- Texts will be charged at £1 plus your standard network tariff rate.
- Competition closes on 23 July 2008.

The wonderful world of widgets

We've played with the latest widgets, and put the top four on your DVD

ECal widget
www.effe-elle.it

Create *iCal* events for eBay auctions you don't want to miss, track them in *Dashboard*, and get a reminder just before the auction ends to place that bid.

Mighty Marvel
www.freecomicssoftware.com

If you like comics, you'll like this. It sucks free images from Marvel comics and allows you to download those you like for use as your Mac's Desktop wallpaper.

MacPinball Preview
www.bakno.com

This preview gives you a taster of the full game, which supports single and multiplayer games on five different tables with global scoreboards.

Moments Widget
www.emeraldion.it

This digital photo frame for *Dashboard* lets you drag images into the widget (from *Finder*, *iPhoto* or *Safari*) and scale it to fit your choice of virtual frame.

DIGITAL HOME

What is Apple's five-year plan?

Diverse digital home products by 2013

Apple's future plans for the digital home could transform the company into the American Sony. This is what's claimed in a highly speculative future-prediction report from Forrester Research.

Researchers predict what the company will accomplish by 2013 in their 'The Future of Apple Inc' report. They say the digital home will be central to Apple's strategy, attacking the market on several fronts: products, home media servers, services and more. To illustrate their point, the researchers offered several speculative ideas for future products, including *iTunes*-connected digital picture frames, Apple clock radios, advanced remote controls, media servers and digital home integration services as an adjunct to the Apple Store's Genius Bar.

The research firm notes Apple's existing market gains, transforming itself from a PC maker to a consumer devices and digital music leader over the past eight years.

While some suggestions are extreme, the analysts insist their overall prediction is accurate, saying the products are just examples to illustrate future company strategy.

Apple TV is critical to the company's digital home strategy.

EVENTS DIARY

Digital Photo and Imaging
26-27 June
Conference and exhibition at the Business Design Centre in Islington, London, for pro photographers and agencies, featuring a complete who's-who of software, service and hardware exhibitors for creative professionals.
www.dpishow.com

NECC
29 June–2 July
Leading US education event that marks the beginning of the crucial US computer-buying season, Apple will host a range of hands-on workshop sessions for educators attending the show.
http://center.uoregon.edu/ISTE/NECC2008/

Apple Expo, Paris
17-20 September
Europe's biggest Apple show returns once again this September, offering the usual fare of exhibitors and a range of free conferences, workshops and seminars. Not to be missed!
www.apple-expo.com

Wave goodbye to technophobia

Chris is happy that his grandmother has a faster Mac than him. No, really...

My mother-in-law has a Nintendo Wii. You have no idea how this makes me feel, given that I don't. Me, I'm still being childishly entertained by the GameCube, but I am nevertheless jealous of my in-laws playing tennis and bowling, and – soon – keeping trim courtesy of Wii Fit.

Actually, 'jealous' is too simplistic an emotion. There's shame, too; how dare I call myself a geek when I'm using previous-generation technology? Why don't I have a Wii? And I'm not just a geek, but a geek who writes about geek things for a living.

It was worst at Christmas. When I visited my family, I discovered that my octogenarian grandmother has a faster Mac than I do. *This is not how things are meant to be*. At this point, it would be entirely traditional in a column of this type to say "What next?" and then list a few even-worse-case scenarios with an increasing incredulity that precisely matched both the rocketing pitch of my voice and my rising panic.

> "When visiting family, I discovered that my octogenarian grandmother has a faster Mac than I do. This is not how things are meant to be"

But I'm not going to. Partly because "my 80-year-old grandmother having a faster Mac than I do" would probably have been the last thing on that list – you know, the lawks-what-is-the-world-coming-to denouement that showed just how crazy this mixed up, topsy-turvy consumer culture really is – but also because I wholeheartedly approve of high technology being bought by people who don't fit the traditional mould.

More importantly, though, it democratises the technology and empowers everyone who uses it. It means, too, that companies can focus on innovating rather than on creating products that are hidebound by yesterday's conventions and expectations. That even my grandmother now watches some of her TV through her iMac shows that we're losing our fear of the complicated.

Most importantly, though, it shows that I seriously need to step up my consumer electronics spending if I'm to hold my head up in the family.

After having his geek status knocked by his octogenarian grandmother, Deputy Editor Christopher has booked a long weekend break to a farm. A server farm.

Me & My Mac

A turbo-charged Mac mini is Shai Vure's pride and joy

1 Western Digital MyBook 1TB
Even if you're not like Shai, producing DVDs from gigabytes of stored video, a large hard disk is vital.

2 Apple AirPort Extreme
At the heart of Shai's network is Apple's 802.11n-capable wireless router, the AirPort Extreme.

3 Apple iMac 20-inch 2GHz
The jewel in Apple's crown, the iMac is an absolute stormer; it packs loads of power in a svelte, sexy shell.

4 HP Photosmart C3180
All-in-ones like this HP model make a lot of sense for small desks, and at today's prices, the scanner is 'free'.

5 Apple Mac mini 1.5GHz
This is Shai's Mac mini media centre. He bought the mini from eBay and upgraded every component.

6 Samsung 32-inch HD TV
Hooked up to his Mac mini, this Samsung display is Shai's TV and cinema, and the picture's great, too.

7 KeySonic ACK-50 RF keyboard
This wireless keyboard includes a trackpad so Shai can control his Mac mini from the comfort of his sofa.

8 Apple iPod touch 8GB
The obligatory iPod. Later revisions of the touch added *Mail, Maps* and more; it's a cracking device.

We hear a lot about the halo effect – the idea that the iPod's charms will draw in Windows users and show them the error of their ways – but it's a bit harder to pin down specific examples of folks buying Macs because they like their iPod.

Luckily, Shai wrote in to tell us about his setup. "Once I'd bought an iPod in 2006 I was off. I loved the Mac vs PC adverts, and it was the design of the iMac that appealed to me. In August 2007 I bought my iMac and I've never looked back.

"I've used PCs since I was 10 and I still use a PC every day at work. It's fine, but it's not exciting. They're also kind of soulless; they do the job, but not terribly well. Lots of bugs and weird messages. Trying to get the calendar on my iPod touch to sync with my PC at work has caused me untold headaches, whereas on my Mac at home there's no drivers to worry about. I've had to go back to using a paper diary!"

Name: Shai Vure
Occupation: Marketing Assistant
Been using a Mac for: Since August 2007
Favourite hardware: iMac 20-inch
Favourite software: Elgato *EyeTV 3*

Despite only having used Macs since last Summer, Shai has already collected lots of kit and lots of knowledge, too. "My day-to-day computer is my iMac and has worked beautifully since day one," he says, "but my pride and joy is my Mac mini media centre which I use as my HDTV, PVR and movie library. I've cracked open the case to upgrade everything: hard drive, SuperDrive, RAM, even the processor to allow me to watch HD. It's connected to a 1TB external hard disk which itself is connected to my AirPort Extreme, storing all my music and video.

> "My pride and joy is my Mac mini media centre which I use as my HDTV, PVR and movie library"

"I love *EyeTV 3*. Each version gets better and it's nearly good enough to beat Sky Plus; I love the ability to record programmes that match your search phrase." The Mac mini was bought from eBay, and its weedy 1.5GHz Intel Core Solo processor has been supercharged by Shai.

"Earlier this year I brought my Mac into work to produce a promotional DVD using *iMovie* and *iDVD*. The software allowed me to create a really professional result and we had 3,000 copies produced and sent to applicants to the university. Try doing that with Windows *Movie Maker*!"

It's not just Shai's own Mac that makes an appearance at the University of Chester; it bought 200 iMacs last year: "You can't move for them in our new library," he says. "It's beautiful but also quite sad. They all run Windows XP (most students and staff can't log into OS X) and there are iMacs solely to search the library catalogue. Imagine that; an £800 computer that can only search the library catalogue."

At least it's £800 of Apple computer, Shai; it could be an awful lot worse!

Want to share your Mac setup with us? Email christopher.phin@futurenet.co.uk

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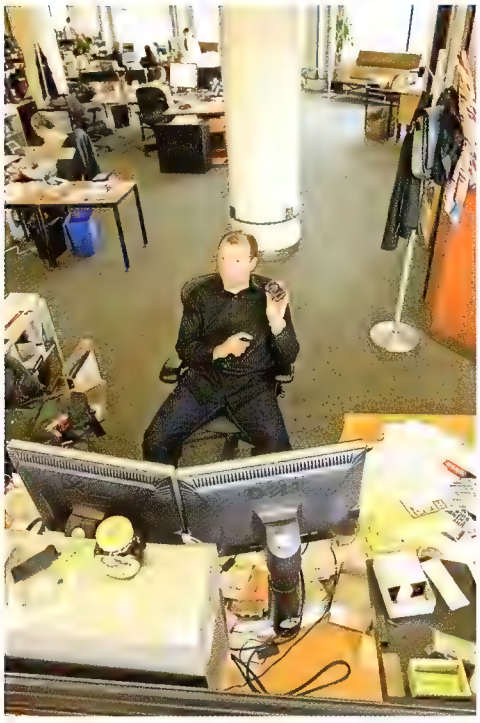
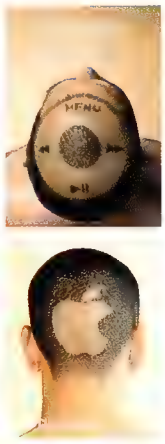
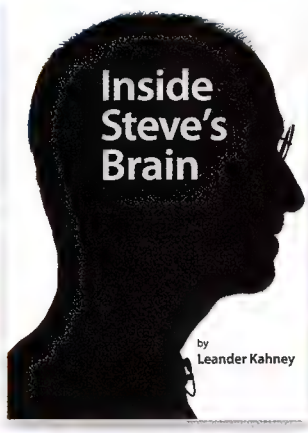
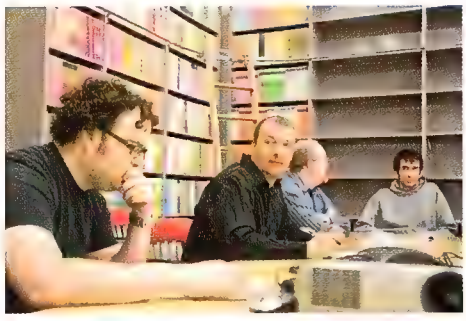
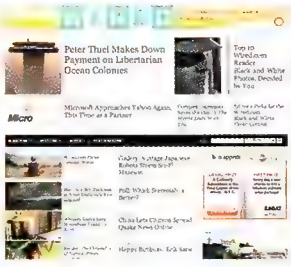






LEFT: Leander's third book on Apple is *Inside Steve's Brain*, following on from the popular *Cult of Mac* and *Cult of iPod*.





ABOVE AND FAR LEFT: As well as being a successful author, Leander is also News Editor for *Wired* magazine.

LEFT: Leander has big plans for cultofmac.com: "I'm gonna get back into the Apple news business. I want to create a community-oriented Apple site. Most sites out there concentrate on Apple, not the community."

I use my Mac for... *journalism and writing*

We speak to Cult of Mac author, Leander Kahney

PROFILE

Name: Leander Kahney
Location: San Francisco
Occupation: Editor and author
System(s): So many computers, it's not funny
URL: www.cultofmac.com, www.wired.com

MacFormat: **What hardware and software do you favour?**
Leander Kahney: I'm a bit of a Luddite – I've got terrible habits that I've never changed. I used to use *Word* for everything – writing, contacts, and even a calendar! Now, I live in email. If I need to do something or find an interesting website, I send myself an email note.

Hardware... I used to have a Palm Pilot, and was diligent about putting appointments on it, but I'd forget it, leaving it in my bag. It'd be freaking out about some appointment, and I wouldn't see it. iPhone and Bluetooth changed all that – I always have my iPhone with me and use Apple's calendar app to set alarms. It's the first time this technology's actually worked.

MF: **You seem to have a love/hate relationship with Apple...**

LK: Lots of people love the products and hate the company. This is exaggerated with me, because Apple's been the source of my income for a dozen years, and reporting on Apple has been frustrating, because the love has been one-way. But Apple's in many ways the only really interesting company. It puts so much care and attention into products – it's not just churning out junk.

MF: **Is there anything that Apple should be doing differently?**
LK: It's hard to say. This book I just wrote – when I started, I had misconceptions about Apple and would bitch about secrecy, lack of communication, and the contempt Apple seemed to have for customers. When I dug into it, the more I understood the logic of why Apple does these things, and saw that it's a smart way to operate. The secrecy is a huge part of Apple's marketing plan – it's not telegraphing to competitors what it's up to, and I like this. It increases the mystique.

MF: **Does Steve's brain affect Apple?**
LK: I don't think there's another company that so closely reflects the person who runs it. When researching the processes Apple has developed, I realised they were manifestations of Jobs's own character traits. His perfectionism and the demand for excellence expresses itself in the many prototypes the company makes. The fact he's a control freak means Apple controls all the technology in these vertically integrated systems – software, hardware, services. Apple's been successful in turning what some would consider negative traits into a business philosophy.

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Letters

Write in and let us know what you think about your Mac, MacFormat magazine and everything Apple

WRITE AND WIN!

CLIPBOARD

"Love the mag, always insightful, and really helped me make the decision to move from Windows."
Phil Young

"Your magazine is a great companion to the iMac. Superb articles. I especially enjoy the tips and tutorials."
Gary Beach

"I've switched from PC with *MacFormat*'s help – what a move! I had trouble with my 24-inch monitor as I had to keep swiping my mouse over the mat to move across the screen, but a 9x8-inch Allsop mouse mat saved the day!"
Ronnie Speers

BRING BACK THE FUNNIES

A few years ago, *MacFormat* used to publish funny and interesting messages that appear on our Macs. Why not bring them back? We could all do with a little light relief in our lives. I enclose one recently found on my Mac at home.
Alastair Turnbull

MacFormat replies: Thanks, Alastair. Good idea. Please email your funny Mac messages to macformat@futurenet.co.uk and we'll print the best ones!

Have funny error messages, like this one, appeared on your Mac? If so, then send them to us!

WHAT, NO APPLE STORE?

We have two fantastic shopping centres in Eldon square, and one of the biggest malls in Europe in the MetroCentre. What we don't have is an Apple Store.

Please tell me why I have to travel two hours to our nearest Apple Store in either Manchester (which has two) or Glasgow. We have a cultural city with two universities, not to mention a fantastic football team, but still no Apple Store! Have you guessed where I'm talking about? The jewel of the North, of course: Newcastle upon Tyne.

It was great to hear that yet another Apple Store is opening just down the road from you, Graham (issue 195), but alas, not me. Come on, Apple – we use your products too. I have an iMac, but I can't just pop down the road to get advice or visit the Genius Bar. I'm sure *MacFormat* has some influence with Steve Jobs: tell him there are thousands of Geordies who need an Apple Store!
Colin Rothwell

★STAR LETTER | MAC vs PC

I recently had to purchase a computer for our church, to show videos and the words of hymns. There is an excellent Mac-only program, *ProPresenter* (why not do a feature on this type of program?) for doing this, but I was concerned that I was choosing the Mac because I was biased – especially when the cost of a Dell was pointed out to me.

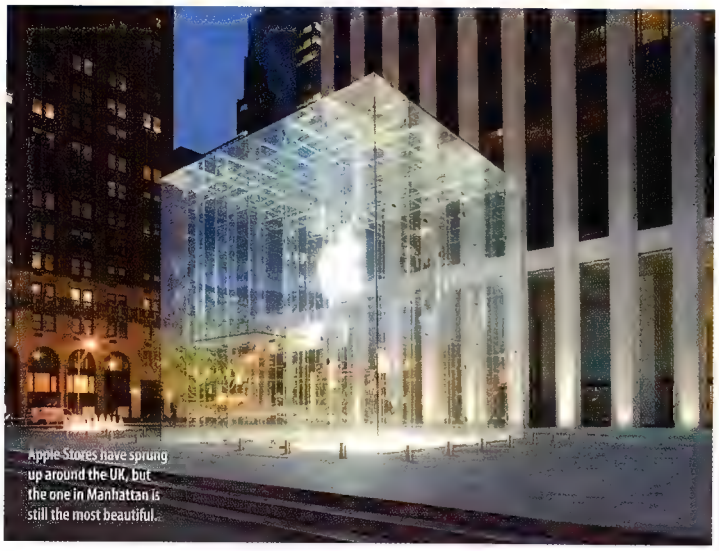
I felt that I had to justify the extra costs, so I priced up the iMac and a Dell to the same spec. To my surprise, they both came out at the same number of pounds! When I then factored in the software costs, there was no contest.

The system is now up and running, and the operators can easily work the system with very little training. The icing on the cake is that other organisations who visit all admire it!
Don Cunningham

MacFormat replies: Macs are often seen as prohibitively expensive, but when you compare like-for-like specs against PC systems they always do very well, and usually come out on top at the high end of the market. It's only in the bargain basement arena that PCs do comparatively well, but at the end of the day you get exactly what you pay for, as many a cheap-PC owner has found out to his or her cost.

For a review of the new iMac, turn to page 82

MacFormat replies: You may have overestimated our influence with Steve Jobs slightly, Colin, but we'll mention Project Newcastle (as we're going to call it) next time he drops in for coffee. Until then, don't forget that you've also got local Apple retailers in Leeds, Scarborough and York to drop into. See our full list of local Apple dealers on page 120.


Apple Stores have sprung up around the UK, but the one in Manhattan is still the most beautiful.

A BIT UNFAIR

I probably know what your answer will be to my request, but I strongly think the competitions in the magazine should be made available for us subscribers/readers/expats outside of the UK.

I know the reason behind these regulations from your suppliers, but considering that I buy a lot of things from sellers in the UK, I should be entitled to participate in at least some of the competitions, like the MacBook Air/*Toast 9* one in issue 196 – I wouldn't mind that!

I've been a regular *MacFormat* reader since 1995 (at least), a subscriber for a couple of years (my local press agent closed), and I've just signed up for the next two years. You are *that* good.

Robert Gille, Sweden

MacFormat replies: We'd love to throw our competitions open to all our readers around the world, Robert. However, competition laws vary between different countries, and making sure we don't accidentally breach the (sometimes contradictory) laws of each and every country is just too large a task to undertake, forcing us to limit our competitions to the united Kingdom only, where we can be sure we're abiding by all the required rules and regulations.

DROPBOX DISASTER

I have only had my iMac since November 2007, but have really enjoyed the Mac OS X experience in only a few months. Your magazine is a great companion to the iMac, and being a Mac novice, the tutorials have really helped.

I was particularly impressed with your article on *Dropbox*, as I considered it a great way of syncing files across multiple platforms. Imagine my disappointment when I followed your instructions to get an account with *Dropbox*, only to find that the software is still in beta testing! Why would you print an article on this subject (with screenshots and instructions on how to use it) when it's not even available to the public? Maybe you should do a bit more homework in the future to ensure that software is available before publishing?

Gary Beach

MacFormat replies: Thanks for writing in, Gary. Sadly, we were caught on the hop by the *Dropbox* developers. At the time we wrote the tutorial the program was still in beta version, but anybody could sign up for an account and access it. At some point between our article hitting the newsstands and you writing your email, the service has been withdrawn from public use until a final version is released. On the positive side, perhaps by the time this letter is printed in *MacFormat*, the full version 1.0 will have been released. Keep an eye on **www.getdropbox.com** for the latest news.

YOUNGEST EVER MACFORMAT READER?

Leave your copy of *MacFormat* lying around and it's likely to be borrowed by a colleague. I knew that was true at the office, but I thought I was safe at home with only the company of my six month old son to distract me! Evidently, this was a false assumption! Take a look at the picture (shown opposite). I eventually got the magazine back after I agreed to tear out the picture of the cat for him. Fortunately, most of the information I needed was on the next page.

[illegible] Your son currently holds the title of youngest (and cutest) *MacFormat* reader, Richard. Thanks for the picture!

It's never too soon to introduce your children to the world of Mac!

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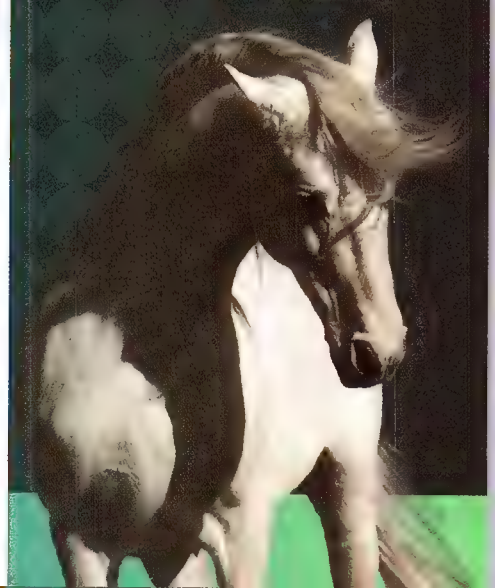
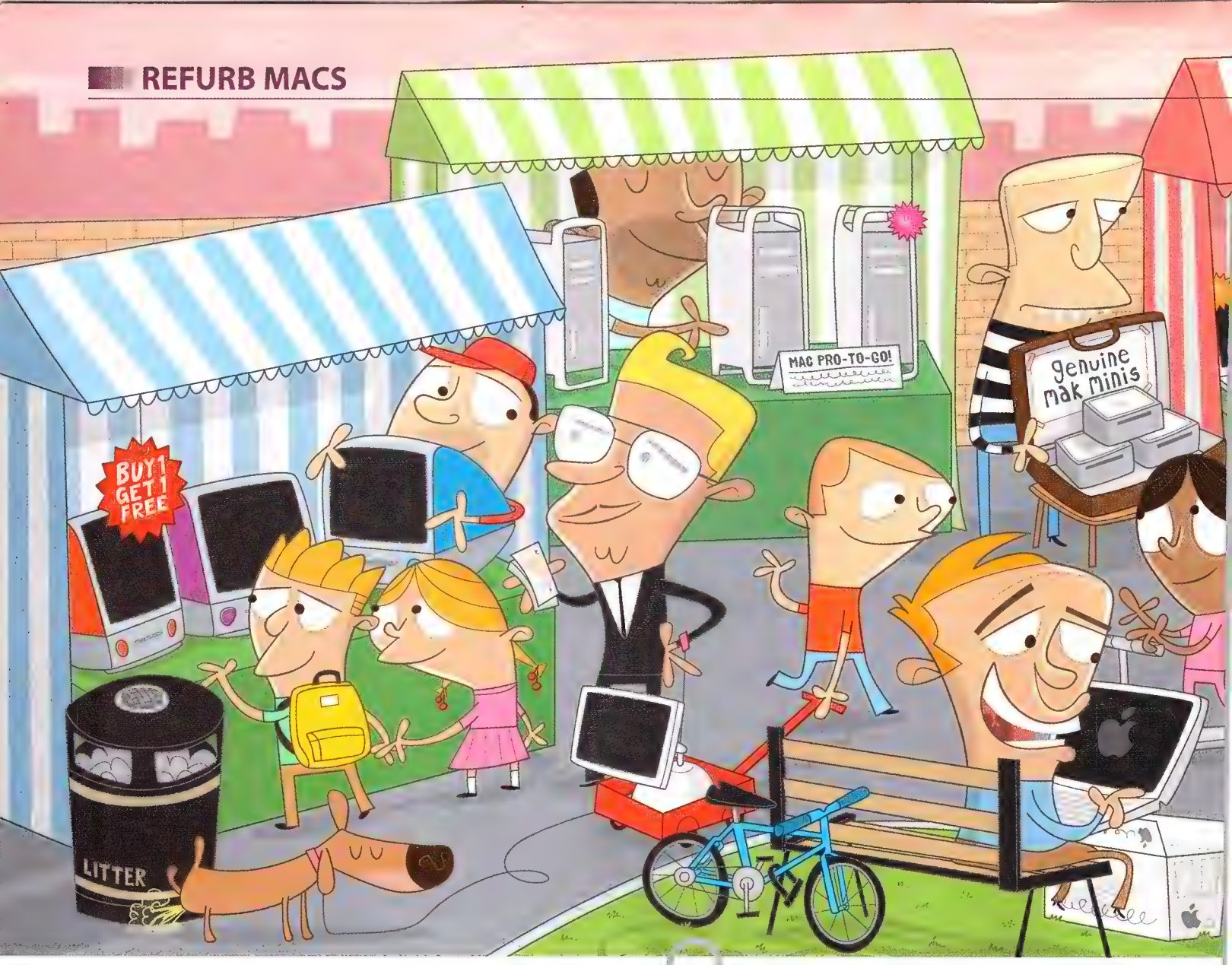




MacFormat investigates...

Words Ian Harris Illustrations The Boy Fitz Hammond

How to buy a refurb Mac

Don't just think eBay to bag a bargain Apple product. The Refurb Store is a goldmine of cut-price Macs and iPods

Time marches on and technology gets cheaper. Falling prices and constant improvement has helped to underpin one of the longest economic booms in history. But with the world flirting with recession and a pinch gripping consumers' wallets, Apple has stood firm: Cupertino doesn't do cheap. Price is the only area in which Apple refuses to compete. When Apple rolls out a new machine, its predecessor is retired. No markdowns, no discounts. But for those in the know, Apple does provide a way of getting new computers at bargain prices. It's called the Refurb Store – an initiative that Apple has quietly run for years.

Waiting game

For a long time the Refurb Store (**www.refurb-store.com**) was only open on Wednesdays. Thrifty Mac fans would queue to buy products offered on a 'when it's gone, it's gone' basis. Now this section of its website is proudly open all week. The products are sold as "Apple Certified Refurbished Products". They're described as pre-owned, which usually

means one of two things. Either they've served as a demonstration unit in an Apple Store or they've been sold (as new) and returned – for whatever reason – to Apple.

One reason buyers are hesitant to 'go refurb' is because they think they're getting something that's more likely to break. With a PC you can just swap out a part if it breaks. With a Mac, that's possible but trickier. However, Apple insists its refurb machines are in "100% working condition". Far from being polished up and bunged in a box, the machines go through a stringent series of checks.

Before a Mac goes out through the Refurb Store it's fully tested, including full burn-in testing – where the computer is left running for a period of time performing tasks repeatedly, in order to winkle out any issues. Any parts identified as defective are replaced, before a full cleaning and inspection process. The machine gets packed up with the relevant manuals and cables, and gets a special serial number. In theory, they've gone though even more checks and assurances than a new machine. "I bought an old-style iMac 24-inch from the Refurbished Store," says *MacFormat* Forum regular SwissMac. "Not only did I get a 28% discount on its original price but the spec was improved, too. The online store said I should expect 1GB RAM and a 250GB HDD, but both of these were doubled when I checked them!"

> "In theory, refurbs have gone though more checks and assurances than a new machine"

It could be new

There's speculation that not all refurb items on the Apple Store are actually refurbished products. Buyers have reported receiving products that appear to be brand new. The reason for this might be that Apple uses the Refurb Store as a clearing house for discontinued products. When a new MacBook comes out, the previous model will be obliterated from Apple's website – except for the occasional listing on the Refurb Store for those in the know.

That's not to say there are no drawbacks. "As these refurbished products have been unpacked and manipulated, they might exhibit some minor cosmetic imperfections, such as scratches, marks or discolouration," says Apple. Plus, they don't come in their original packaging, which might affect your machine's resale value if you later put it on eBay.

There's no telling what will be on offer until you visit. Sometimes the cupboards are bare, but other ►

Pros & cons

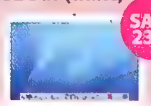
RECENT REFURB OFFERS

MacBook 2.1GHz Intel Core 2 Duo (white)

SAVE 15%

Original price: £699
Refurb price: £599

MacBook 2.2GHz Intel Core 2 Duo (white)



SAVE 23%

Original price: £829
Refurb price: £639

MacBook 2.16GHz Intel Core 2 Duo (black)

SAVE 33%

Original price: £1,039
Refurb price: £699

MacBook Pro 2.4GHz Intel Core 2 Duo

SAVE 26%

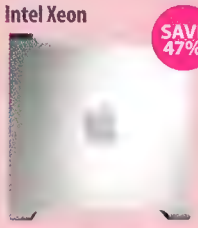
Original price: £1,799
Refurb price: £1,339

iMac 2.8GHz Intel Core 2 Extreme

SAVE 31%

Original price: £1,459
Refurb price: £1,019

Mac Pro 8-core 3.0GHz Intel Xeon



SAVE 47%

Original price: £4,675.33
Refurb price: £2,499

iPod shuffle 1GB (green)

Original price: £49
Refurb price: £25

SAVE 49%

iPod nano 8GB (black)

Original price: £129
Refurb price: £99

SAVE 24%

times they overflow with bargains. This unpredictability has given the Apple Refurb Store quite a following and bargain hunters monitor it obsessively. There's even a Dashboard widget (**www.refurb-store.com**) to let you keep an eye on it. "With the *Refurb Store* widget you can always have an eye on the latest refurbished Mac products, that is to say discount deals, available in more than 15 countries," says the developer. "The interface is divided into three products: Mac, iPod and iPhone and shows detailed product names and the refurb price. You can save more than 30% off the original price!"

As mentioned earlier, often a refurb doesn't come in its original packaging. If it does, it might be torn or ripped where shipping labels have been added and torn off. But this doesn't seem to reflect the quality of the product inside. "I've bought every Mac that I have ever owned from the Apple Refurb Store," says Mac fan, Jon Waters from Cambridgeshire. "That includes every Mac I've bought for my wife, every Mac at my office and every Mac I've suggested to my friends and family. Everything's come from the Refurb Store and none has failed. In fact, I'd go so far as to say that the refurbished Macs have actually run better than a family member's new Mac."

Some people take the money they save and pimp out their Mac further. "I'm on my second Apple refurb," says Michelle King from Doncaster. "I have a refurb PowerBook that's served me well for years without any issues. And I just got a refurb iMac. It looks and works absolutely perfectly. With the money I saved I bought an extra gigabyte of RAM, a wireless keyboard and a wireless mouse."

Bagging a bargain

Getting the best deal from the Refurb Store can be a bit of a dark art. The store is monitored slavishly by many eagle-eyed bargain hunters and dithering for too long often means that your item goes. But choosing often isn't straightforward because of the variety of products on offer. For instance, there's a white MacBook with a 2.1GHz Intel Core Duo processor and a Combo drive for £599 – £100 off the RRP. But for an extra £38, you could order a model with a 2.2GHz processor and an 8x SuperDrive. Or, for an extra £60 on top of that, you could have the sexier black model – and take the memory from 1GB to 2GB and get a 160GB hard drive.

Apple's Refurb Store is seen by obsessives as a barometer of Apple's plans for product updates. Often, in the run-up to Macworld, the Refurb Store will seem to offer more products that look likely to be refreshed – whether it be laptops or iMacs. "The last refurb product I bought from Apple (an iPod) came in complete retail packaging, shrink-wrapped," says Mac fan IJ Reilly on the MacRumors message board. "The product refresh came a couple of weeks later (drat!). I believe selling off new hardware as 'refurbished' is one of the sneaky ways Apple has of clearing out excess inventory before a refresh." Some have found it possible to snag bargains on the Refurb Store and 'flip' them on eBay for a small profit. Part of the reason products don't hang around for too long is that they're snapped up by Mac scalpers. "You're getting what amounts to brand new products at less than their retail price," says one source, who asked not to be named. "Often you can add £100 and sell them on eBay within a few hours. You don't even have to order them yourself – if you're quick you can sell it on eBay, then order it from the Refurb Store to be delivered straight to the buyer." In theory, buyers can tell it's a refurbished machine because the serial number is different, but most don't bother/think to look – or they simply don't know how.

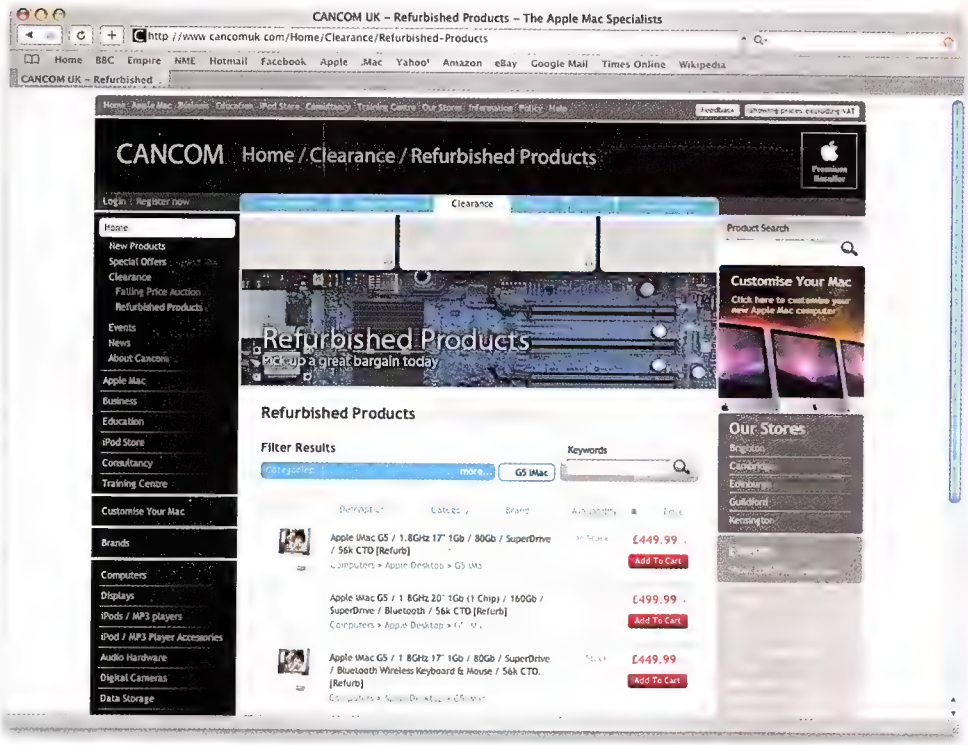
> "Most customers agree that buying refurbished is the safest way to get a cheap Mac"

LAST UPDATE	MAC FROM	IPOD FROM
28/05/08	£ 599	£ 25
iPod shuffle 1GB - Orange		£ 25
iPod nano 4GB - Silver		£ 69
iPod nano 8GB - Blue		£ 99
iPod nano 8GB - Green		£ 99
iPod nano 8GB - Silver		£ 99
iPod nano 8GB - PRODUCT (RED)		£ 99
iPod nano 8GB - Black		£ 99
iPod touch 8GB		£ 169
iPod touch 16GB		£ 239
MacBook Pro 2.4GHz Intel Core 2 Duo		£ 1 099
MacBook Pro 2.4GHz Intel Core 2 Duo		£ 1 339
MacBook Pro 2.4GHz Intel Core 2 Duo		£ 1 339
MacBook Pro 2.5GHz Intel Core 2 Duo		£ 1 359
MacBook Pro 2.4GHz Intel Core 2 Duo		£ 1 479
MacBook Pro 2.5GHz Intel Core 2 Duo		£ 1 529
Mac Book 2.1GHz Intel Core 2 Duo - White		£ 599
MacBook 2.2GHz Intel Core 2 Duo - White		£ 639
www.refurb-store.com		

The *Refurb Store* widget enables you to monitor new refurbs from your Desktop.

Peace of mind

Most refurb customers agree that buying refurbished is the safest way to get a cheap Mac. But if you're still worried, there's a solution – you could use the money you saved to add AppleCare to a package. You can buy AppleCare to protect any machine, not just computers that you buy 'new'. As long as you



Can't find the bargain you're after on the Apple Refurb Store? Then try CANCOM, which is another Apple-authorised vendor offering refurb Macs and iPods.

purchase and register your AppleCare within one year of buying your product, you'll get an additional two years of warranty cover.

Refurb Store versus eBay

Despite the success of Apple's Refurb Store, when it comes to getting a Mac on the cheap, most turn to eBay – a goldmine for refurbished or 'used' – Macs. Picking up a machine here can be a bargain, but it's not without its pitfalls. For some reason, Macs seem to be a popular target for scammers who will create copies of legitimate auctions in an attempt to snag eBayers into sending money via untraceable Western Union. Seasoned eBayers advise paying close attention to a buyer's feedback. If they don't have a history of selling electronics, or they haven't had a transaction in a while, be extra careful – their account may have been hijacked by a scammer. Recently, a spate of listings for £500 MacBook Pro machines worried buyers. "Some people look at their 10 feedback and think that these sellers are OK," says Roba on the MacRumors.com forum. "These sellers' feedback is usually very suspect. A good majority of the people who have left them feedback aren't even registered members any more."

> "Apple's hardware stays relevant longer than the equivalent in the PC world."

Resale value

It's widely known that Macs hold their resale value better than PCs, with used models changing hands for a good chunk of change long after they've disappeared from the Apple Store website. James Stoup of AppleMatters.com recently ran some numbers to calculate just how better they fare. "A new machine currently costs $2,000, while a year-old machine sells on eBay for around $1,500, and a two-year one for about $1,000. At this point, one would expect things to go downhill from there fairly rapidly (like with PCs). But instead, prices seem to level off a bit, which means you can – and in fact, I just did – sell a six-year-old laptop for close to $400. This is even more impressive when you realise that you can buy a brand new laptop from Dell, Acer, Toshiba and the like starting at around $600." Stoup thinks it's because Apple's hardware stays relevant longer than the equivalent in the PC world. "With Windows Vista, all the reviews I have read seem to recommend you run the operating system on either a new machine or at least a fairly recent one. How many Mac users bought a new machine to run Tiger? Quite a few, no doubt, but it should be noted that I ran Tiger just fine on a six-year-old 667MHz laptop. Go get a six-year-old Dell and let me know how well it runs Vista."

Apple isn't the only company offering official refurbs, either; CANCOM is also an Apple-authorised refurbished seller, so if you can't find the Mac or iPod you want through Apple's store go to **www.cancomuk.com/home/clearance/refurbished-products**. Don't give up hope; your next Mac is out there, waiting to be bought. And it's going to cost you less that you thought.

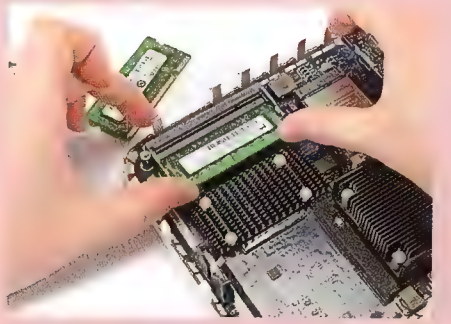
READERS' EXPERIENCES

CASE STUDY #1: Chris Hilton

CASE STUDY #2: George Ryan

CASE STUDY #3: Danielle Bullock

SPARE CASH TO SPEND?



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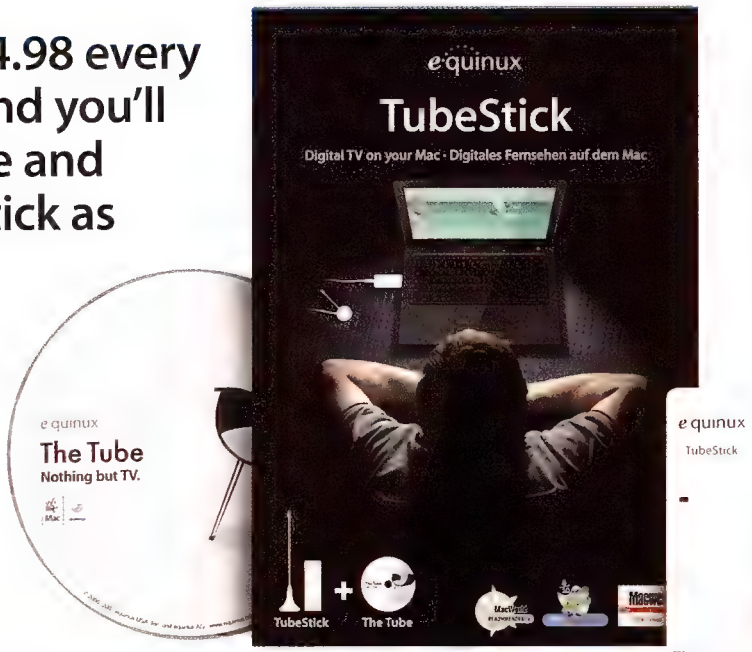
TubeStick is a superb-quality TV receiver. It boasts a stylish, sleek design, a white antenna that's tailored to the Mac – so it won't block necessary ports on MacBooks – and its high-class chipset receives Freeview.



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- **TubeTalk:** live-chat with [illegible]
- **TubeToGo:** publish your TV [illegible] access is required); and [illegible] web interface
- **Scheduled Recordings:** [illegible] programme guide in *The Tube* [illegible]
- [illegible] rewind your TV shows while [illegible]
- **Déjà Vu:** Rewind and [illegible]
- **Innovative User Interface:** [illegible]
- **Smart Zoom:** [illegible]

The Ultimate Mac Survival Guide

Essential hints, tips and kit for your iLife apps, mobile Macs, design & music

Words Graham Barlow, James Ellerbeck, Trevor Middleton, Christopher Phin Photography Phillip Sowels, Amanda Thomas, Jesse Wild

This, soldier, is the front line. In the battle to use your Mac to the best of its ability, no man or woman can afford to have sub-standard kit, and that's why we've put together this series of survival guides.

Throughout the pages of this feature, we'll point out and explain the essential kit for five different kinds of Mac user. From the *iLife* guru creating masterpieces in Apple's lifestyle suite to the mobile worker keeping in touch with the office from anywhere in the world, and from the design professional to the roving troubleshooter helping keep Macs going no matter what, by way of the music master who dances to his own beat, every kind of user has their list of can't-be-without-it kit that makes their job or hobby possible.

And so we've asked five of *MacFormat*'s writers to share with us the checklist of equipment they deem to be utterly vital. But this is no mere wishlist of pretty kit. We're not interested in the most expensive monitor or the fastest Mac. We don't care that printer A is 5% faster than printer B. This is a get-your-hands-dirty, practical guide to the best realistic investments you can make to help you in your Mac-using life. We haven't picked anything because it's the shiniest or has the most buttock-clenching price tag.

For every product that we list, we want to explain why we believe it to be the best piece of kit for the job. It's the equivalent of each of our five writers sitting you down in a pub and explaining – with perhaps just a touch too much wide-eyed fervour than most people feel comfortable with – what they use and why you should use it.

So buckle up; study your survival guides well, and you won't be left behind.

MEET THE EXPERTS | Bringing you the essential kit

[1] The iLife Guru
Editor Graham has a one-year-old son; his *iLife* skills help him capture baby Barlow's every move for posterity.

[2] The Mobile Worker
Chris, *MacFormat*'s Deputy Editor, is always on the road, covering trade fairs and product launches.

[3] The Troubleshooter
Q&A maestro Trevor Middleton is a regular presence on *MacFormat*'s podcast; here, he shares his secrets.

[4] The Music Master
The man who single-handedly introduced reggae to China (honestly), James DJs around Bristol.

[5] The Design Pro
Art Editor Alex makes *MacFormat* the thing of beauty that it is; he's very demanding. In a good way.

iLife guru

Graham's choice of iLife essentials starts here

Apple *iMovie* turns your Mac into a complete video editing suite, but before you set to work on creating your magnum opus you're going to need a few essentials. Let's start with the video camera. I've gone for the excellent Canon MD235. There are lots of good models, but the MD235 is a MiniDV camera, rather than HD, and, bang for buck, MiniDV cameras (and cassettes) are better value than solid-state memory.

Next, you're going to need more storage space, since video editing eats it up like you wouldn't believe. The 500GB LaCie Rugged All-Terrain Hard Disk is small, portable and has both FireWire 400 and 800 connections. *iMovie '08* stubbornly insists on a FireWire drive for storing its Event libraries – it will ignore any USB drives you connect. With 500GB you're also going to have enough space to store your *iPhoto* library.

For photography, Apple's *iPhoto* will cover most of your needs, and you're going to need a camera. My Canon EOS 400D is a superb quality entry-level digital SLR. Even though it doesn't have the resolution or image stabilising lens of its big brother, the EOS 450D (see review, p85), it's cheaper and its image quality is almost identical. And because you can add lenses as you gain experience, it's a camera that can grow with you.

Of course, half the fun of photos is printing them out. The Epson PictureMate 290 is easy, convenient and produces cracking prints. The inks come in an easily replaceable cartridge, so when they run out you can pop in a new one. It can even burn CDs of your photos!

The intuitive *GarageBand* software handles audio recording on the Mac, but you need a few extra bits of kit to get the most out of it. For instance, I've gone for the M-Audio *Podcast Factory* for voice recording, rather than relying on the iMac's built-in mic. It comes with broadcast-quality microphone and a recording interface that I can plug my guitar into. Now I can jam away to my favourite beats and record the results. We've even used the *Podcast Factory* for recording on our *MacFormat This Week* podcast.

Finally, all this kit plugs into the ultimate Mac when screen space is key: a 24-inch iMac. It may be too big for many home users, but for *GarageBand* editing it's ideal. ▶

AT A GLANCE

[1] Hohner L90
[2] Podcast Studio kit
[3] Apple iMac 24-inch
[4] Canon MD235
[5] Epson PictureMate 290
[6] LaCie Rugged All-Terrain Hard Disk
[7] Lexar 8GB 133x Professional CompactFlash cards
[8] Canon EOS 400D

WHY YOU NEED A .MAC ACCOUNT

A Mac with *iLife* installed on it has everything you need for producing professional quality productions, but what about sharing those with others? There are plenty of ways to share your photos and videos online, but the most convenient way is with a .Mac account. At £69 a year it's not cheap, but you get your very own mac.com email address and access to some exclusive *iLife* features that aren't available otherwise. The first is **Web Gallery**, which is built right into *iPhoto* and *iMovie* so you can put your photos and movies online in just a few clicks. You also get website hosting, so any sites you've created in *iWeb* can be uploaded at the click of mouse. The same applies to your podcasts created in *GarageBand*.

There are lots of other non-*iLife* reasons to get a .Mac account, too, like the new (Leopard-only) **Back To My Mac** feature, which enables you to access one of your Macs from another, iDisk for storing files online, an online *Backup* application and 10GB of storage space. Basically, if you want the full Mac experience then a .Mac account will seal the deal.

Mobile worker

Chris's expert hints and tips for using your Mac on the move

Working on the move is about two things: keeping connected and keeping powered-up. The first bit is easy: for years, all of Apple's laptops have included WiFi, so you can simply hop onto one of tens of thousands of WiFi hotspots all across the world. But even if you can't get connected over WiFi, there's still hope. A USB modem that connects to the mobile network – such as the Vodafone USB Stick – means I can get connected almost anywhere. I even use it on trains, where I find it speedier and more reliable than the onboard WiFi. I'm reliant on getting coverage from Vodafone – or its partner networks abroad – but I have yet to be stranded, even in the wilds of Scotland.

Then there's power. One of my bugbears with the MacBook Air is the lack of a removable battery. When I'm away from the office for any length of time, a single three-hour plus battery charge just isn't going to cut it. Having a spare battery for my MacBook means I can swap it over and keep going all day if needs be.

Apple's international adaptors are vital, too; you could plug any IEC C7 plug into the power brick, but the official adaptors are neat and compact, so I can keep working when abroad.

I don't often have to print things out when I'm working remotely, but this compact printer from Canon – one that includes a rechargeable battery so I don't even need a power socket – is really handy for hotel confirmations, press releases and, of course, airline e-tickets.

The rechargeable mouse I carry with me is work of genius; it can connect over Bluetooth – handy, since my laptop has Bluetooth built in – or its own wireless connection. This latter mode requires a dongle, but usefully this is also a 1GB memory fob.

A decent bag is vital, of course; in reality, this gorgeous soft leather bag from Knomo is a little too small to be practical. I should really change to one of Brenthaven's solid and impeccably-engineered bags, but my vanity keeps me using this little beauty. This particular model has been discontinued, but the Knomo Stirling is similar. ▶

INTERNET VIA MOBILE PHONE

You don't need to buy a USB modem to connect to the internet over the mobile network; you could use your mobile phone. You'll need to connect it to your Mac – Bluetooth is easy and convenient, though you could use USB or infrared if your laptop is old enough – and some handset manufacturer-specific modem scripts on your Mac to allow it to connect. Ross Barkman's scripts from **www.taniwha.org.uk** work a treat, and though in earlier versions of the OS checking the box at the end of the Bluetooth pairing process to allow the phone to work as a modem didn't work with these scripts, our testing suggests it works fine now. Or, *launch2net* from **www.novamedia.de** will simplify the process.

Whichever you choose, you'll be billed for the data you send and receive when using GPRS and 3G services, and not the length of time you're online.

AT A GLANCE

[1] Knomo Ixopo bag
[2] Canon Pixma iP100 with battery
[3] International adapters
[4] Apple MacBook
[5] Microsoft Mobile Memory Mouse 8000
[6] Spare battery
[7] Apple iPhone
[8] Vodafone USB modem

04
05
06
07
08

Roving troubleshooter

Trevor shares the essential kit he uses for fixing broken Macs

A big external hard disk with multiple interfaces is an essential I wouldn't be without – this LaCie 500GB hard disk has USB 2.0, FireWire 400, FireWire 800 and Ethernet connectors. With Mac OS X installed, it can be used to boot a PowerPC Mac using the FireWire interface, or an Intel Mac using USB 2.0. If you want to do the same, use *Disk Utility* (Applications > Utilities) to partition the disk using the GUID Partition Table (GPT) scheme for Intel Macs, or Apple Partition Map for PowerPC Macs.

The SATA hard disk cradle holds either a 2.5-inch laptop disk, or a 3.5-inch disk from a desktop Mac – it has both USB 2.0 and eSATA interfaces. SATA disks are hot-swappable, so you can just drop one in and carry on working with it – brilliant!

A ballpoint pen is handy for pushing recessed reset buttons on the back of, say, routers. You can also use them for scribbling notes.

The Belkin three-pronged parts retriever is used for grabbing those bits and bobs that drop

AT A GLANCE

[1] LaCie 500GB external hard disk
[2] SATA hard disk cradle
[3] Bic Crystal ballpoint pen
[4] Belkin three-pronged parts retriever
[5] Maglite 2AA LED torch
[6] Victorinox Cybertool (with Apple customisation)
[7] Small screwdriver (part of Cybertool kit)
[8] Torx screwdriver set
[9] Fellowes Air Duster
[10] Wallpaper scraper
[11] 50 pence coin
[12] 4GB USB flash drive
[13] Paperclips
[14] Ethernet crossover cable
[15] Six-pin to six-pin FireWire cable
[16] Rescue discs
[17] Tsunami 2.5-inch SATA hard disk enclosure
[18] Mac OS X 10.5 Leopard

inside computer cases – or anywhere else, for that matter.

The Maglite, Cybertool and Torx bits are the core of my toolkit – the Cybertool has pretty much everything I need. For awkward jobs, I lash the Maglite to my wrist with a couple of rubber bands – it's more precise than a head torch, as it's right at the heart of the action. The Torx screwdrivers let me remove a MacBook's hard disk from its caddy.

Air dusters are great for blowing the gunk out of clients' keyboards, or dust out of anywhere. They can be a bit aggressive, so for more delicate work I have a photographer's blower brush.

Practically all Mac mini owners will recognise the scraper. This, or something similar, is used to prise open the mini in order to get inside and upgrade the memory. Before doing this, don't forget to discharge the static electricity from your body by touching a metal part of your Mac's case.

For opening the memory compartment under most iMacs, a coin – any coin – is all you need.

USB flash drives are incredibly versatile – the one in the picture can be used to boot an Intel Mac, and has *TechTool Protogo* (**www.micromat.com**) installed.

If the paperclips bring back memories, you can call yourself a veteran Mac user. A straightened paperclip is still handy for pressing the reset button of an AirPort Extreme Base Station.

There are a couple of reliable ways to transfer data between two Macs; an Ethernet crossover cable is one. If both Macs have Gigabit Ethernet, you can use a patch cable or a crossover cable – the Mac will automatically detect which type is being used. A six-pin to six-pin FireWire cable is used to connect two Macs before rebooting one (the target Mac) whilst holding down its [T] key. The target Mac will then mount on the Desktop of the host Mac as an external hard disk.

Sometimes, you'll need to boot from a Mac OS X Install DVD to run *Disk Utility*, reset a forgotten system password, or reformat and reinstall.

Alsoft's *DiskWarrior* (**www.alsoft.com/diskwarrior**) is a great last resort for reviving hard disks that your Mac won't recognise any more.

Finally, if you've upgraded the hard disk but it's still serviceable, put it in an enclosure, like the Tsunami one here, for use as an external disk.

Music master

James's bag of musical delights helps him rock the casbah

Depending on the gig, I could arrive at a club with just a box of records or a van full of amps and speakers. Whatever the event, the one constant is my own pre-amp mixer and audio sources. The club might provide its own equipment but public kit can be in battered condition, or, frankly, not very good. I often use a basic vinyl setup if it's a rare music night, but for modern sounds mastered for a digital sound system, I prefer to take a digital station with me. It has a number of advantages, including the aforementioned quality issues, but mostly I know my way around it and can load it up with samples before I leave home.

My current mixer choice is the Korg Zero 4. All the audio signals pass through the Zero 4 before heading off to the main amps and speakers. It has four channels, with two inputs per channel, allowing up to eight audio sources to feed from. It has a basic sampler, too, which I don't use much, and a load of digital effects and a MIDI controller, which I do use.

Plugged into the Zero 4 are my PowerBook G4, a Korg Kaoss Pad 3, a Pioneer CDJ1000 CD player, two iPods and Sennheiser HD215 headphones. I have a USB-powered Samson C03U mic feeding into the G4, where filters are added, then it goes into the mixer. I also use the G4 to record each session. I lug the laptop, iPods, headphones, Kaoss pad and mic around in a UDG Producer bag, which has knapsack shoulder straps for ease of transport.

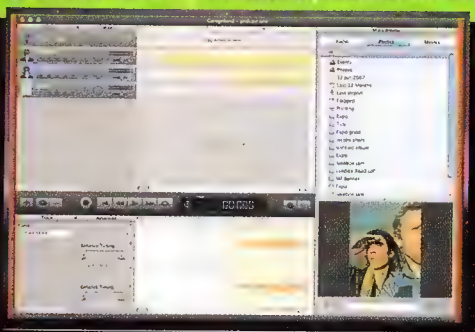
I could use a newer Mac but there seems little point and I'd rather the PowerBook got a sticky drink on it than a MacBook. At the end of the night the recording goes onto one of the iPods so I can listen to it on the way home. For playing out during the gig, the iPods carry a range of music that can be amplified through the Zero 4 mixer. I can also quickly plug an iPod into the back of the Kaoss Pad 3 if I want to add in some extra effects. The Kaoss Pad has a touch-sensitive finger pad that warps sound as you drag your finger to different parts of the pad.

The CDJ is for mixing and scratching CDs and has a decent range of effects. It is not necessary given the other audio sources, but for variety it can be nice to press play on a CD track every now and again, especially if I need to nip to the loo.

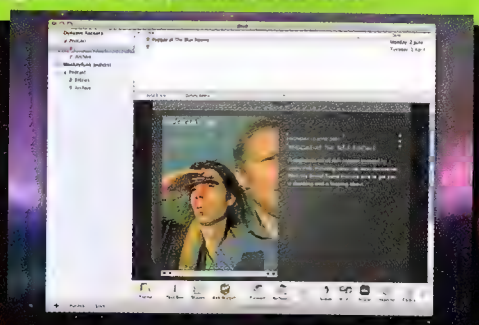
AT A GLANCE

[1] Sennheiser HD215
[2] Korg Kaoss Pad 3
[3] Korg Zero 4 mixer
[4] Samson C03U USB mic
[5] Apple iPod classic/ U2 iPod Special Edition
[6] Pioneer CDJ1000
[7] Apple PowerBook G4
[8] UDG Producer Bag

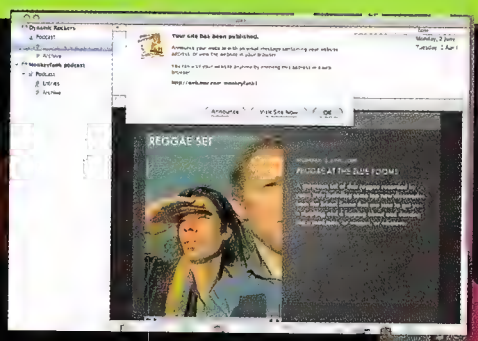
STEP BY STEP Create a podcast in GarageBand and publish it to .Mac



01 From the *GarageBand* welcome options choose **Create New Podcast Episode**. After *GarageBand* opens, start to build your podcast. Either import your pre-made audio segments or make some new ones inside the app. When you are done, go to **Share** from the menu bar and select **Send Podcast to iWeb**.



02 The podcast you created will appear in the main **iWeb** window. You are given a choice of which existing project to add it to, or a new page outside any project. Add a picture to it if you like, and some text explaining what the podcast contains. This will help keep the podcast attractive to the random browser.



03 When you have decorated the podcast page you are ready to publish it. Click the **Publish** button in the bottom right-hand corner of *iWeb*. This will publish the page to your .Mac account if you have one and used it to publish *iWeb* content. If you have not used *iWeb* with .Mac before, go to File > Publish All to .Mac.

A big thank you to Blair and everyone at the Blue Rooms in Bath for allowing us to use their night club as the location for this photoshoot.

Design pro

Alex shares his power tips for designing on a Mac

While I considered an iMac rather than a Mac Pro as my main design Mac, in the end the combination of flexibility and power meant that I stretched my budget a little further and went for the Pro. The four internal drive bays make adding extra storage cheap and neat, and though I don't have any expansion cards fitted in the case yet, I like that I can keep improving this machine rather than simply replacing an entire closed system like the iMac. I'm considering a RAID box as a high-capacity, redundant external hard disk, and I'd rather connect over eSATA so that I'm not bottlenecked by USB.

Picking the Pro meant I was forced to buy a standalone display. The Eizo ColorEdge CG221 has a huge gamut, consistent colour across the screen, and best of all can be used to soft proof work without the expense and hassle of running out hard proofs on the printer. It can be calibrated accurately thanks to 12-bit lookup tables, and so long as I'm careful with my colour workflow in *Creative Suite*, I'm never surprised when I get finished work back from the printers.

The pack of Pantone colour swatches help, too; by defining spot colours in my layouts – or just letting my printer know how I'd like my blocks of process colours to turn out – I can get consistent results. Keeping an eye on the details is vital, so my loupe is never far from my hands; it's ideal for checking that the separate cyan, magenta, yellow and black plates used by printers are aligned properly.

When it comes to sketching there's no substitute for pencil and paper, but the Wacom graphics tablet is a boon for jotting down quick layout ideas or creating display art.

Finally, there's my HP Photosmart Pro B9180. It lets me print full-bleed, high-quality A4 spreads on A3+ paper. It lacks a built-in RIP for top-quality output, but the combination of eight separate coloured ink tanks and impeccable performance whether laying down solid colour or rendering soft, subtle skin tones make it indispensable. I just need to make sure it's calibrated properly and regularly.

AT A GLANCE

[1] Apple Mac Pro
[2] Eizos ColorEdge CG221
[3] Pantone Essentials Euro kit
[4] Helix 8x loupe
[5] GretagMacbeth Eye-One Display 2
[6] Wacom Cintiq 12WX
[7] HP Photosmart Pro B9180
[8] Inspirational and technical books

TOP 5 GRAPHICS PROGRAMS | Great apps to make your life easier

Art Directors Toolkit
$40 (£20) www.code-line.com

This is a truly essential little app. It brings together lots of handy snippets of information and calculations, including a colour picker – like *DigitalColor Meter*, in your **Utilities** folder, on steroids – colour space convertors for getting, say, hex values for Pantone shades, a tool for working out imposition, ways of looking up exotic characters and much more.

Art Rage
$25 (£13) www.ambientdesign.com

Sure, Corel *Painter* dominates the natural media market, but this little app from the New Zealand development house, Ambient Design, is a beauty. It's far easier to get some sketches down with this than with Corel's behemoth, and the interface can slip into the background to let you concentrate on your art. It's the perfect companion to the Wacom Cintiq.

GraphicConverter
$35 (£18) www.lemkesoft.com

Most people know better than to send in graphics in odd formats, but you can guarantee that at some point in your career, somebody will send you a file that even *Photoshop* just shrugs its shoulders at. That's when you need *GraphicConverter*. With the ability to open 200 different file types, it's an essential part of my design arsenal, and it has some great batch convert features, too.

Kuler
£FREE http://kuler.adobe.com

Not a bit of software that runs on your Mac – though there is a browsing widget from **http://labs.adobe.com/technologies/kuler/** – but rather a fantastically useful web service from Adobe. It's essentially a colour picker, but it makes the process of defining colour relationships and picking colour swatches simple. You can export the swatches to *CS2* and *CS3* apps, too.

Suitcase Fusion
£65 www.extensis.com

Font Book is a great little app, but it doesn't beat *Suitcase* for sheer power and flexibility. Plus, since most companies will turn to *Suitcase Server* for font management, knowing your way around the single-user app is good training for working in a corporate environment. That it automatically enables fonts used in many document types when opened saves me a lot of time.

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This issue, I want to turn the spotlight on Trevor's tutorial on uninstalling apps from your Mac. Even though it's a bit of a flaky system, one of Windows' features that I'm always secretly jealous of is its uninstall engine. The Mac has no such handy equivalent, and though some programs are very well behaved and keep their assets carefully tucked away inside the app itself, others strew supporting modules in arcane little nooks and crannies all over your system.

Luckily, Trevor's guide explains how the Mac keeps track of these bits and pieces, and how to eradicate unwanted software.

There's a whole lot more besides, of course; some fantastic creative tutorials exploring iMovie, iPhoto, iDVD and Photoshop Elements, and a slew of technical and productivity tutorials to help you get the best out of your Mac round out this issue's tutorial section. Happy reading!

Restore faded photos p40

Take control of Apple Mail p50

Zap unwanted applications p53

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How to...

MacFormat brings you all the tips, tricks and tutorials you need to get the most from your Apple products

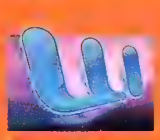
Next issue

As you read this, the MacFormat tutors are hard at work writing a whole issue's worth of tutorials for next month.

We're turning our attention to productivity in next month's cover feature (see p12 of this issue), but we've also got some cute stuff in the tutorial section for less intrepid users. Kevin Wells shows us how to email photos from iPhoto, we'll have a walkthrough on adding a voiceover in iMovie and we'll show you some cool Office 2008 tricks.

Email pictures from iPhoto

Add a voiceover in iMovie



Tip more in Office 2008

Did you know?

There's an easy way to find out your serial number

By default, when you open the **About This Mac** window from the **Apple** menu, the light grey text under 'Mac OS X' displays which version of the operating system you're running. But if you click that text twice, you'll see your Mac's serial number, which is very useful if it needs repair. (Clicking just once shows you the operating system's specific build number, which isn't much use to you unless you're providing details to a company trying to help you solve a problem, usually with software.)

This image has lost its sparkle and is in real need of a quick restore.

After a bit of *Elements* magic, this old photo now looks like it was taken yesterday.

Restore old colour photos

If you have old colour photos that are past their prime, here's how to make them shine

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- A scanner
- Adobe *Photoshop Elements 6* (£58, www.adobe.com/uk)
- 20 minutes of your time

Over time, the dyes used in colour photos will fade and lose their original sparkle. This is particularly true of prints made in the 1960s and 70s when colour photography was still finding its feet. Look back at some of your older family photos and you'll see that the colours will have faded and the images will have become creased and generally old-looking.

Fortunately, in this digital age there's plenty we can do to restore sparkle and make an old image look like it was taken more recently. We're going to show you how to do a really quick restore job using Adobe's *Photoshop Elements 6 for Mac*. Of course, you can spend ages on restoring an image using some very sophisticated techniques, but unless you want to devote a day to each picture, then you're not going to get good results unless you follow our guide to the quick and easy cheat's way of restoring pictures.

> "There's plenty we can do to restore sparkle and make an old image look like it was taken more recently"

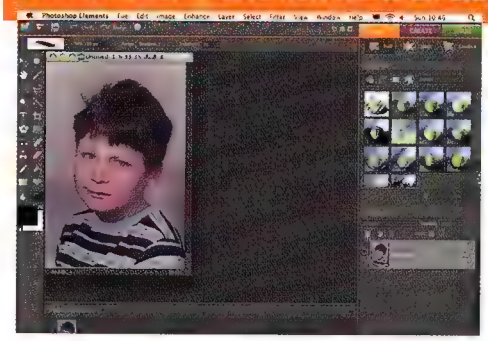
Of course, you will need a scanner in order to get your original photo onto your Mac and opened up in *Photoshop Elements*, but these days most all-in-one machines usually include a simple scanning device that can produce a good scan of those old photos.

In many cases you can scan the shot right into *Photoshop Elements* using the **Import** option in the **File** menu. In this instance, don't muck around with the scan settings as that will just take longer and spoil the quickness of this two-minute restore job.

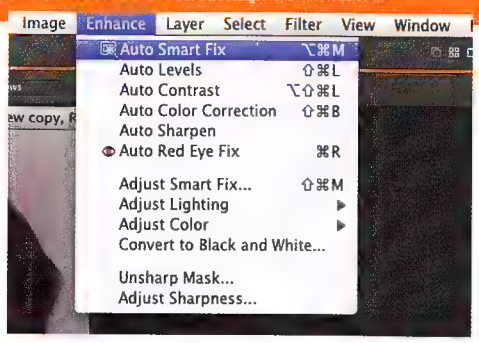
So let's get going and put colour back into this small boy's cheeks. Once you've realised how quick and easy it is, you will be digitising and editing all your old family photos.

Mark Sparrow

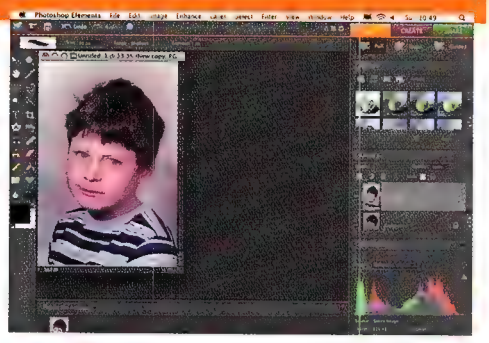
STEP BY STEP Give new life to an old photo with Photoshop Elements



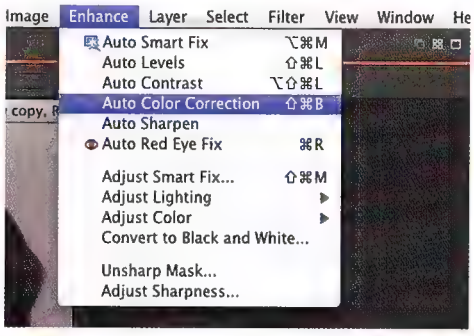
01 Here's our scan imported directly into *Photoshop Elements*. It's got a nasty magenta cast, some damage to the print surface, a few creases and a generally lacklustre appearance. There are two ways we can deal with this. The first is to use the **Smart Fix** feature, which seems like the most obvious step. So let's try that.



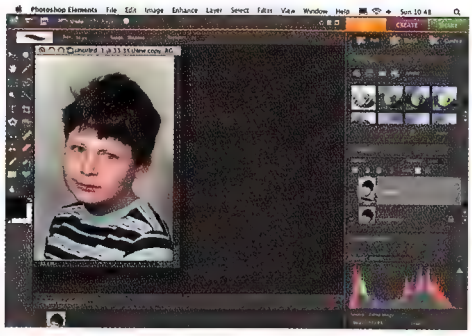
02 You'll find the **Auto Smart Fix** command in the **Enhance** menu, or simply use the ⌘+⌥+[M] combination of keys and see what the result is. If you look in the lower right-hand corner of *Elements'* screen you can see the colour Histogram, which shows us that the image is not well balanced, especially in the highlight regions.



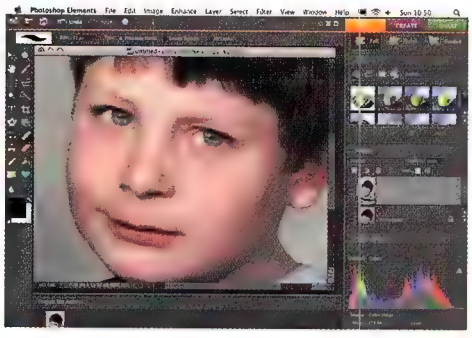
03 Yuck! That's not a natural result at all. Now that's not to say that the **Auto Smart Fix** always gets it wrong, but in this instance it's just made a bad picture worse. However, look at the Histogram again and you can see that the light values are much more evenly distributed. It's just the colours that are wrong.



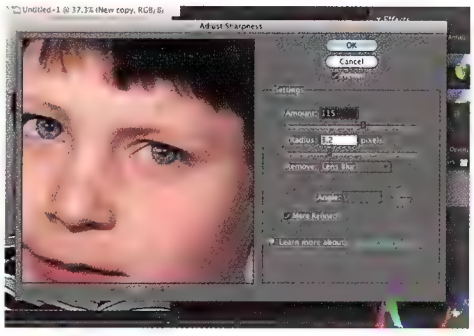
04 Also in the **Enhance** menu is the **Auto Color Correction** command (⌘+⇧+[B]) which can work magic on this sort of image. Remember, were looking for natural skin tones and we don't want to see that magenta cast. Look again at the Histogram and see what changes are made once we've invoked the **Auto Color Correction**.



05 Amazing! What a difference. **Auto Color Correction** has made a much better job and really made the shot look much more up to date in terms of colour. We're not finished yet, though. We need to do a quick tidy up on some of the blemishes and creases in the shot. For this we'll use the **Spot Healing Brush Tool**.



06 The **Spot Healing Brush Tool** icon looks like a plaster. Just drag it over any part of the picture that you want to mend. It magically fills in with samples from the neighbouring pixels. One word of warning, though: don't use where light and dark areas meet in a distinct line as you will get a bleed effect.



07 Finally, let's sharpen up the shot using the **Adjust Sharpness** function. Once again, you'll find this in the **Enhance** menu. We're going to select the **Lens Blur** setting and then fiddle with the **Amount** and **Radius** sliders. Do make sure you view the image at 100% for an accurate image of the effect of the sharpening tool.

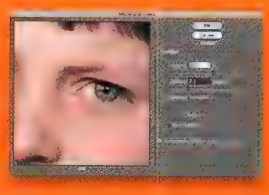
08 Finally, don't be afraid to crop your photo. The original photographer may not have been able to compose the shot effectively or may have been restricted in some way. So take a look at your shot and decide if a crop would add anything to the overall impact of the photo. Now save the image and move onto the next restoration job.

TOOL SCHOOL

The Spot Healing Brush Tool is easy to use and covers almost any blemish. Be careful using where high contrast areas meet as it can bleed.

EXPERT TIP

Correct colours and exposure first. Then repair the image using Healing tools and finally sharpen. That's the best sequence to use.



Add vivid colour with iPhoto

Use iPhoto to inject intense colour into your photographs, but without looking tacky

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- G4 processor or better
- Apple *iPhoto 7* (£55, part of *iLife '08*, www.apple.com/uk/thestore)
- Lacklustre images

You've seen it before: a friend with a great new digital camera sends you a family photo, but they then went crazy with *Photoshop*'s deadly colour controls. The whole family, even the baby, looks like they're in circus clown make-up.

iPhoto puts the same powerful controls that are in *Photoshop* in your hands with just a few simple sliders that can make colours leap off the page. But you don't want to mess with the colours in every image, only the ones that are washed out or lacking something. With the power to perfect a photo comes the responsibility of knowing when enough is enough.

> "With the power to perfect a photo comes the responsibility of knowing when enough is enough"

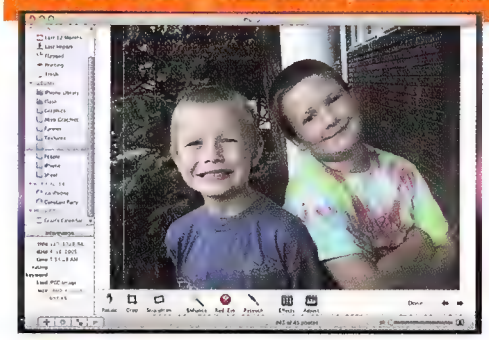
There is a real finesse to colourising. Generally the rule of thumb is this: if it looks really cool, you've probably overdone it. It's also a good idea put it to one side and come back to it a little later on. With fresh eyes you will often see a very different editing job than the one you were so proud of. Also, remember that almost 10% of the male population and a smaller percentage of the female population is partially colour blind. And that could mean you. What looks flawless to someone with partial colour blindness may look too bold to a normal eye.

For many images, *iPhoto*'s **Enhance** button can make a huge improvement and really give your images some snap. Many of the same controls you can use to liven up your photos, like the **Exposure**, **Saturation**, **Contrast**, **Temperature** and **Tint** sliders, are part of the magic of the **Enhance** button as well.

It's good to experiment with the sliders, but don't go overboard.

Kevin J Wolfe

STEP BY STEP Add some pizzazz with iPhoto's sliders



01 Open *iPhoto*. Double-click on your image to open it in the **Editing** mode. It's always a good idea to try the **Enhance** button first. This may give the results you're looking for or give you a starting point. If you're not happy with the results, press ⌘+[Z] to undo, or choose **Undo** from the **Edit** menu.

02 Click on the **Adjust** icon. It's critical that your colours are balanced, since colour issues increase with enhancing. If your image needs balancing click on the **Eyedropper** button and then click on an area of the image that should be white or grey. You can re-click on another spot to find an area that gives you the correct light balance.

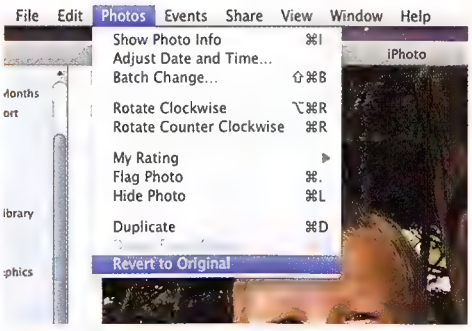
03 If after multiple tries you can't find an area that will give you balanced colours, you can use the **Temperature** and **Tint** sliders to balance manually. Drag the **Temperature** slider right to warm or left to cool. Drag the **Tint** slider left to add red and right to add green. Use the white colour outside the photo to compare.

04 The **Highlights** slider can darken highlights without turning your shadows black. This can make saturating colours easier. Use the **Highlights** slider with extreme caution, since it can add a lot of contrast and can quickly turn your image gaudy or mottle faces. In most instances you wouldn't want to move this slider beyond 15%.

05 The **Saturation** slider boosts all colours equally, but it also darkens the image. As you drag the **Saturation** slider right, you'll want to drag the centre grey **Levels** slider left to add exposure to the image. Watch carefully that you're not adding unwanted colour. Check sunny day shadows for excessive blue reflected from the sky.

06 A little contrast can push the shadows into deep black and give those saturated colours something to stand out against. There are two techniques for this. One is to drag the **Contrast** slider right. You have to be careful not to overdo it. The **Contrast** slider can also lighten the brightest highlights and make them less likely to saturate.

07 The second method of adding contrast is sneakier; just drag the **Sharpness** slider right. Sharpness increases the contrast at the edges of objects, not over the whole image. Watch closely as you drag, especially when used on human faces. Since other controls can degrade the work of the **Sharpness** slider, it's best to use it last.



08 If at any point you would like to start from scratch, click on the **Reset** button and all changes will be undone. When you're finished, click the **Done** button to save your work. Should you regret what you've done tomorrow, the **Reset** button or choosing **Revert to Original** from the **Photos** menu will both allow you to start over.

TOOL SCHOOL

iPhoto's powerful Adjust dash makes photo fixes easy. It can handle most of the issues that photographers turn to expensive editing applications for.

EXPERT TIP

The tool you should try to avoid using when editing your images is *iPhoto's* Shadows slider, since it usually works against your saturation efforts. In lightening any shadowed areas it can also make photos look unnatural.

Send iMovie projects to iDVD

Use iLife '08 to export high-quality iMovie projects and chapter markers for use in iDVD

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- Apple *iMovie 7.1.1* (£55, part of *iLife '08*, www.apple.com/uk/thestore)
- Apple *GarageBand 4.1.2* (£55, part of *iLife '08*, www.apple.com/uk/thestore)
- Apple *iDVD 7.0.1* (£55, part of *iLife '08*, www.apple.com/uk/thestore)
- An *iMovie '08* project, ready to export

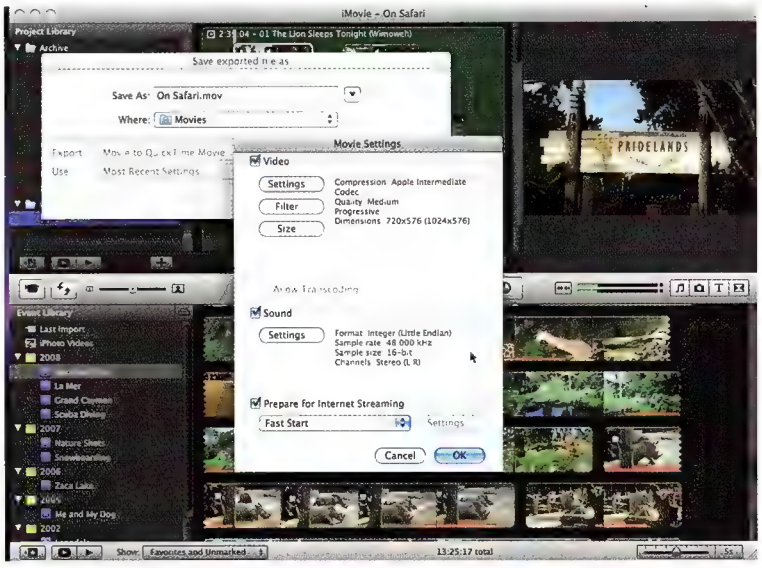
Apple *iMovie* and *iDVD* used to work so well together: once you'd edited your film you were able to create and name chapter markers straight from within *iMovie*. You could then use the **Share** menu to send your creation to *iDVD*, where it would be added to a project, complete with automatically generated chapter menus.

With *iMovie '08*, Apple decided that the future was online, and focused much of its attention on distributing your home movies via the web. Unfortunately, this wasn't much use to people who still preferred to create their own DVDs, especially if the person they wished to share it with didn't have broadband.

The problem – and solution!

Firstly, *iMovie '08* no longer has an option in the **Share** menu to send your film to *iDVD* (you have to export is as an H.264 file first, which will then be re-encoded to MPEG-2 – the native language of DVDs – which causes a generational loss in image quality).

Secondly, creating chapter markers has also been completely crippled: that functionality has moved to *iDVD*, where you no longer have control over where those markers are placed. Instead, you can only alter the fixed interval between markers: you can choose, for instance, to only add one every five minutes, irrespective of scene changes or content.



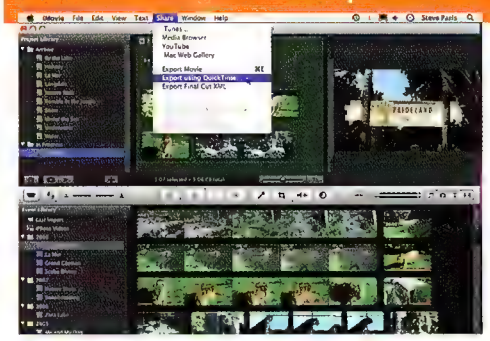
Our process will begin by setting *iMovie* to export using *QuickTime*. From here, you can start inputting your parameters and settings.

> "You can bypass iMovie '08's Share menu to export footage, and use GarageBand to add chapter markers"

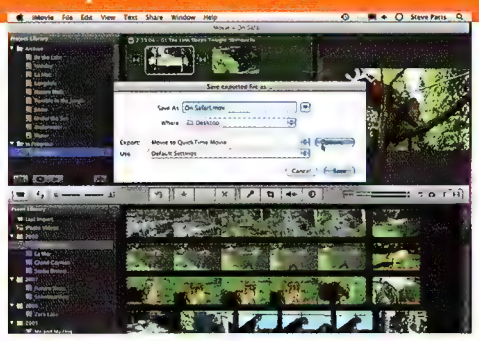
On the face of it, this is terrible news. However, all is not lost! We have a handy solution. Thankfully, *iLife '08* has a few tricks up its sleeve which will enable you to regain all of your lost tools. In this tutorial, we'll show you how to bypass *iMovie '08's* **Share** menu to export high-quality footage. We will then explain how to use *GarageBand* to add chapters exactly where you want them. The process may not be quite as seamless as it used to be, but at least the options are still available, and they work a treat.

Steve Paris

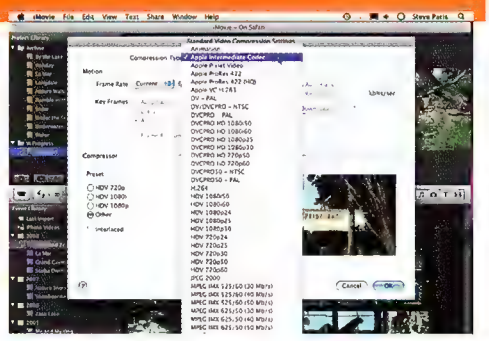
STEP BY STEP Create chapter markers and export movies to iDVD



01 Once you've completed your project and no longer wish to modify it, it's time to prepare it for its journey to *iDVD*. The traditional **Export Movie** option will encode your film in H.264. To prevent this and attempt to export the best quality possible, go to the menu bar and choose Share > Export Using QuickTime instead.

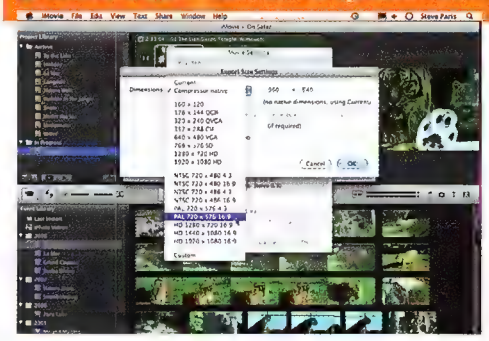


02 A window appears, offering you traditional options such as naming your file and choosing a location in which to save it. Beneath that are two pop-up menus: **Export** and **Use**. Make sure each is set to **Movie to QuickTime Movie** and **Default Settings** respectively. Click on the **Options** button to the right of the **Export** menu.

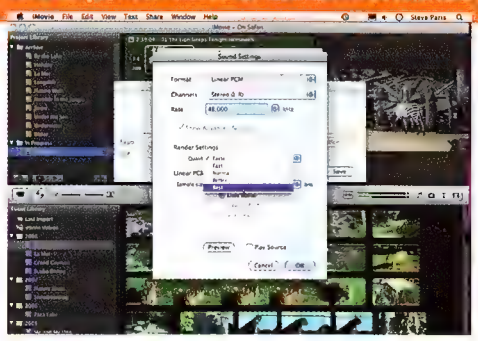


03 You will see a window displaying a summary of the parameters used to save your film. Click on the **Settings** button. Change the **Compression Type** to **Apple Intermediate Codec** (a high-quality option designed to save the best quality possible while preserving space. If space isn't an issue, you could try **Animation** instead). Click **OK**.

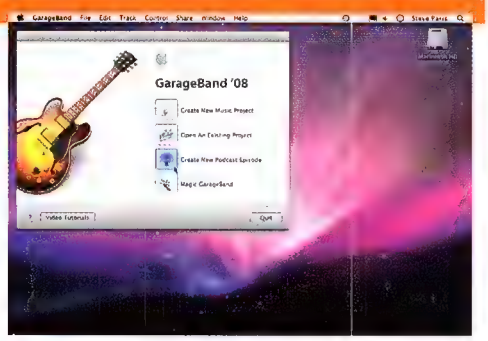
STEP BY STEP Create chapter markers and export movies to iDVD... continued



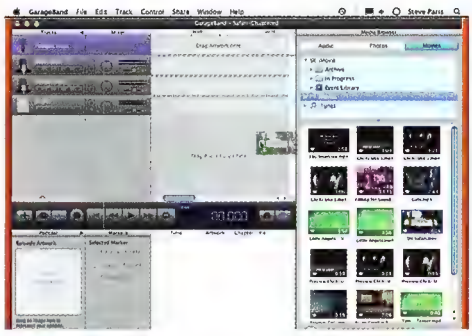
04 Skip the **Filters** button unless you wish to add an effect to your entire film, then click on the **Size** button. Next, change the **Dimensions** pop-up menu to whatever the output of your DVD will be. For instance, you could choose **PAL 720x576 16:9** for UK widescreen format or **NTSC 720x480** for US audiences.



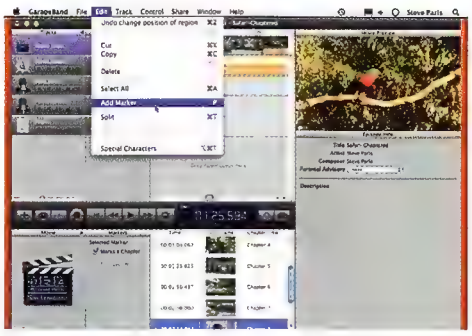
05 The **Sound Settings** should already be set to **Linear PCM** (an uncompressed format). Those parameters are fine as they are, but if you wish you can increase the **Render Settings** from **Normal** to **Best**. When ready, click **OK** to close all windows and click on the final window's **Save** button (for convenience, save it to your **Movies** folder).



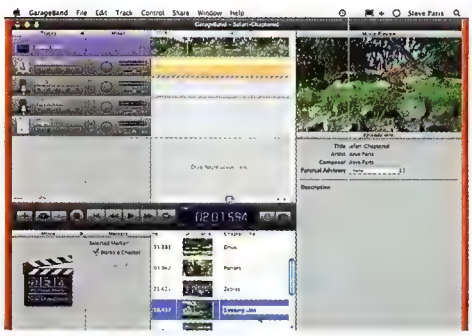
06 We're done with *iMovie '08*. Although not necessary, you can keep your workspace tidy by either **Hiding** or **Quitting** that application. Launch *GarageBand*. By default, it opens up the last project you were working on. Close it to go back to the welcome screen. Choose **Create New Podcast Episode**, give it a name and save it.



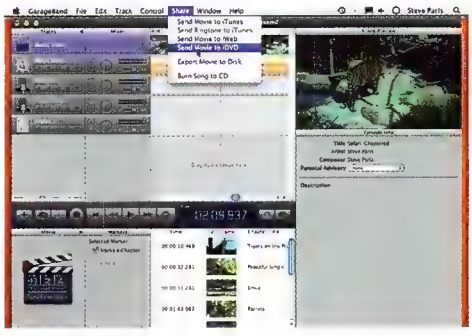
07 *GarageBand*'s **Podcast** section offers access to the **Media Browser**. Click on the **Movies** tab and select the **Movies** folder. Your film should appear in the bottom section. If you have too many there, use the search field to narrow down the listing. You can then drag it to the **Track** section and choose to **Replace** the Podcast track with it.



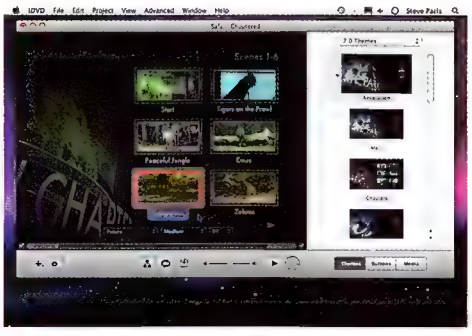
08 You can drag the playhead or use the left and right arrow keys to scrub through your film. When you reach a point where you'd like to add a chapter marker, go to Edit > Add Marker (or hit the [P] key). If you'd rather click on a button, select the **Movie Track** to have an **Add Marker** button appear bottom-left of the interface.



09 You can give your chapters more memorable names by clicking on the one given by default in the **Chapter Title** column. You could also manually alter the time if you weren't satisfied with the result in the previous step by clicking on the **Time** column's values. Add chapters throughout your film before proceeding further.

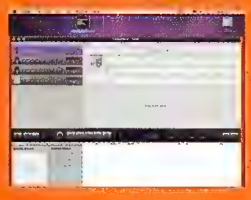


10 When ready, click on the **Share** menu. It is not necessary to choose **Export Movie to Disk** this time (if you do, make sure you choose the **Full Quality Video** setting, which will not affect the image quality in any way). Instead, select the **Send Movie to iDVD** option. *GarageBand* will read your file and open *iDVD* automatically.



11 *iDVD* will have created a **Chapter Index** for you. If you notice a typo in one of your chapters, you won't need to go back to *GarageBand* as you can alter it directly from *iDVD*: click twice on the name you wish to alter. Also notice that a marker was added at the start of your project, even if you didn't add one yourself.

TOOL SCHOOL



You don't have to make use of the Media Browser to add your files to GarageBand: you could simply drag its icon from Finder onto the application's Tracks section.

EXPERT TIP

Sometimes, the audio doesn't get imported properly from GarageBand. If this happens, go to Preferences > Advanced and uncheck the Auto Normalise option.

OS X SURVIVAL SKILLS

Survive a crash course

You don't need to spend all your time on hold – once you know how

PROFILE

Name: Trevor Middleton
Occupation: Mac OS X trainer
System: 24-inch iMac (2.4GHz), MacBook (2.16GHz), Power Macintosh G4 tower (1GHz, FireWire 800)

Working in technical support for a dealer or manufacturer can be a pretty thankless job: there are, after all, only so many ways in which to couch the instruction to turn a device off before turning it on again.

For the customer, calling technical support lines can be even worse, and you're often faced with this: "To speak to someone on another continent with a tenuous grasp of the English language, please press 1. To speak to someone who's annoyingly patronising, but at least in the UK, please press 2. To listen to a selection of light classical music while we attempt to delude you that your call really is important to us, please press 3. For all other enquiries, or if you haven't already lost the will to live, please try again later…"

As I was saying, one of Mac OS X's weapons in the war against system glitches, and one that's useful to get to know, is CrashReporter. You must have seen it in action, possibly without realising what it was called: for a start, it's CrashReporter that generates the dialog that pops up whenever an application quits unexpectedly, informing you, rather helpfully, that "Mac OS X and other applications are not affected". "No indeed," I always feel like replying, "they're good, honest, unpretentious applications." But I digress.

> "CrashReporter's key function is to produce a full log of what happened leading up to the crash"

CrashReporter's key function, however, is to generate a full log listing exactly what was happening leading up to the crash. You can find these logs in ~/Library/Logs/CrashReporter. To simplify matters, their name always begins with the name of the application or process that crashed, followed by, in order, the date and time of the crash, and the name of the host computer on which the crash occurred. Here's an example: "Safari_2008-04-14-135843_Trevor-Middletons-iMac.crash".

Double-click on one of these reports and it'll open up in the default application, *Console*. Alternatively, open up *Console* (which you'll find in Applications > Utilities), and you'll see a list of crash reports in the **Log List** on the left (along with various other messages passed by other applications to OS X). Incidentally, if the **Log List** isn't visible, just click on **Show Log List** in *Console*'s toolbar. Next, click on the name of the report you want to examine and it'll open up in the right-hand pane.

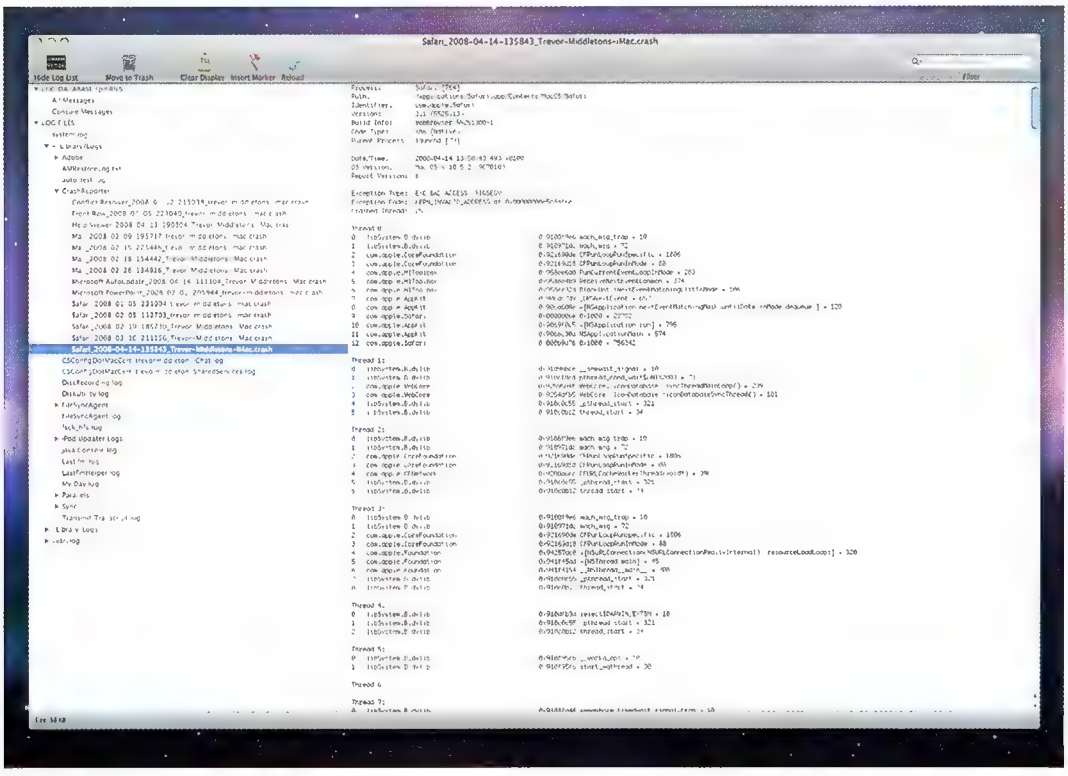
Scan slowly down the CrashReporter log and you'll see that the first part is pretty self-explanatory – the process (application) that crashed, plus the application's filepath and other assorted system information. Incidentally, notice that the filepath drills down into the .app package (a container file that holds the application plus associated files such as application icons) to show the location of the application's binary file.

Email your log

As you can see from even a cursory inspection, CrashReporter logs are pretty complex – indeed, they're most useful to programmers and technical support people who can interpret them. To help this process along, you can email a log file directly from *Console* by choosing it in the **Log List**, then selecting File > Mail. *Mail* will then launch, together with a blank email with the log attached.

To provide even more comprehensive information, you could also email a complete profile of your system, which is easy to do from *System Profiler*. Launch *System Profiler* (by going to Applications > Utilities), then go to File > Save and save the file to your Desktop before attaching it to the email. The resulting .spx file can then be opened in *System Profiler* on another Mac.

Play your cards right, then, and you can provide technical support staff with all the help they need right from your Mac, by email – which means no more waiting, no more *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik*, and no more "Your call is important to us… Please hold…"



CrashReporter logs open in *Console*, and are a mine of information – if you know how to interpret them.

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Use a Mac as a base station

You don't need to spend out on an AirPort Extreme to share a connection wirelessly…

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- One Mac running at least Mac OS X 10.2 with a connection to the internet and a WiFi card
- Other devices to connect to the WiFi network you'll be creating

For many of us, the modem supplied by our ISP allows you to connect just one computer, over USB if it's a cheaper modem, or Ethernet as is often the case with cable broadband. That's all fine; most of us would buy a wireless router like Apple's AirPort Extreme Base Station if we had an Ethernet connection. But we don't like spending money if we don't have to, and there's no such easy option if you have a USB modem.

There is an easy solution. It depends on you having a 'spare' Mac, and the technique here turns that Mac into a base station that shares the connection it has through your modem over WiFi. The typical scenario is this: a desktop Mac is permanently connected to the internet via a USB modem. You share that connection using the Mac's WiFi, which allows you to use laptops, handheld devices and indeed other WiFi-enabled desktops completely wirelessly.

You can easily turn a Mac into a base station to share a WiFi connection between it and other Macs. Just follow our easy walkthrough.

Using the WiFi connection

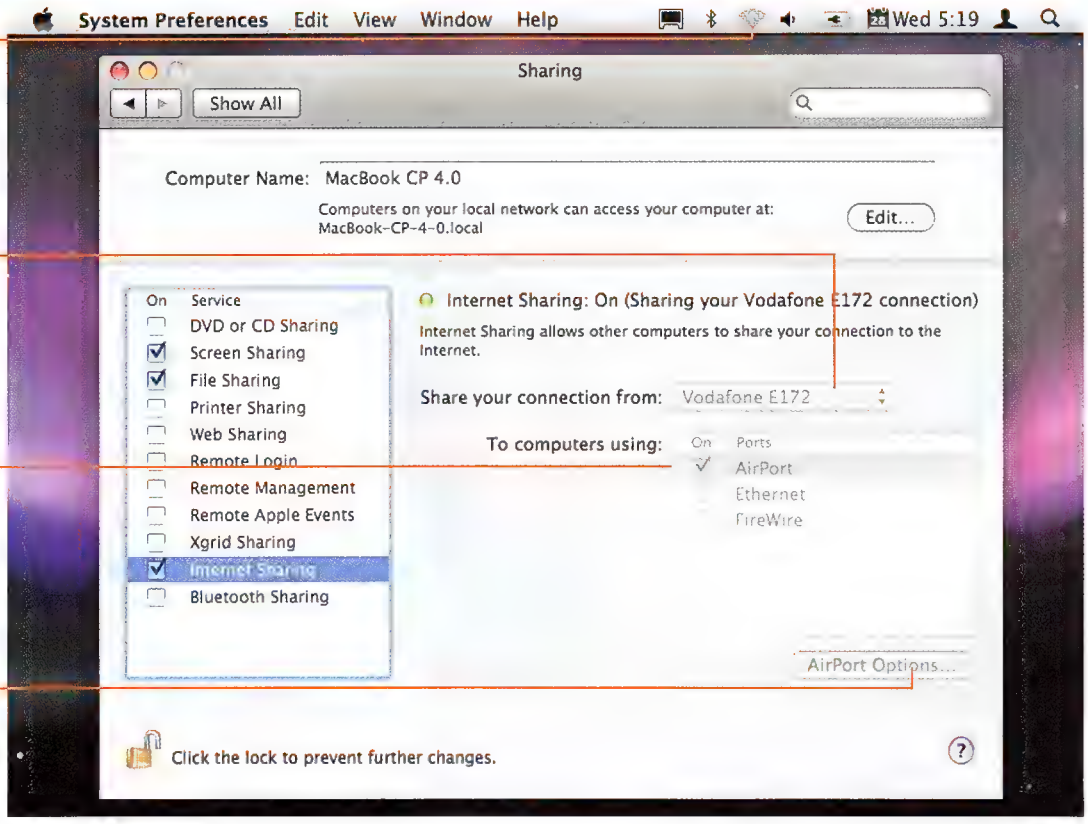
If neither the base station Mac nor the others you'll be joining to it have WiFi built in, you'll need to add it; remember, the base station Mac will need to be on when you want to use your WiFi network.

Bear in mind that the terms and conditions of your ISP may state that you must not share your connection to more than one computer, so do check first.

Here, we'll be sharing the connection from a cellular data modem from one MacBook to another. You can adapt these steps for any USB or Ethernet connection.

Christopher Phin

TOP FEATURES | The Sharing pane in System Preferences



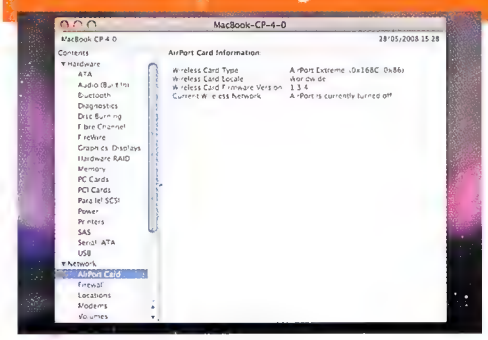
WiFi network icon
This icon shows that you've created a WiFi network with your Mac; normally, the AirPort icon is three lines radiating out from a dot.

Shared connection
Though you could share from any network port, here we're sharing a connection from a Vodafone USB cellular data modem…

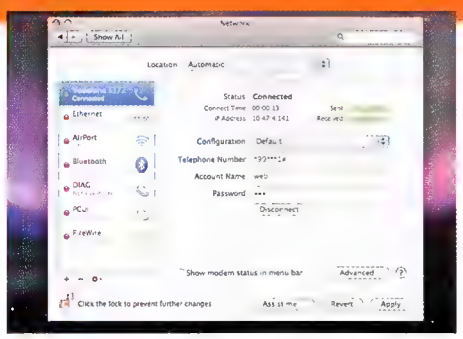
Method of sharing
…over the MacBook's AirPort card. You could, however, also share a WiFi connection over Ethernet, should you want to connect a WiFi-less Mac.

AirPort options
You can set some options for the WiFi network you're creating, including very basic security and the name of the network itself.

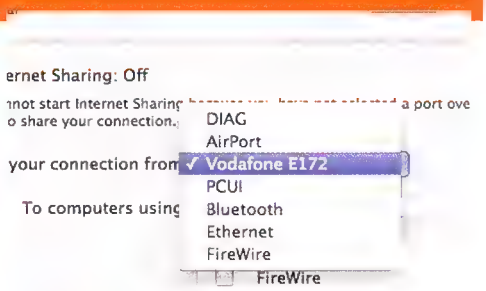
STEP BY STEP Turning a Mac into a base station



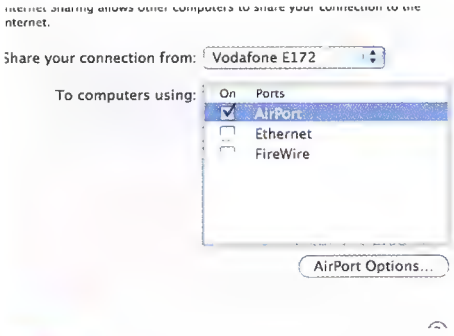
01 We're going to share a connection from a USB modem over AirPort, so we need to check that the Mac we're using has an AirPort card built in. All modern Macs do, but you can check on your Mac by selecting **About This Mac** from the ⌘ menu, then clicking **More Info** – check the **AirPort Card** entry under **Network**.



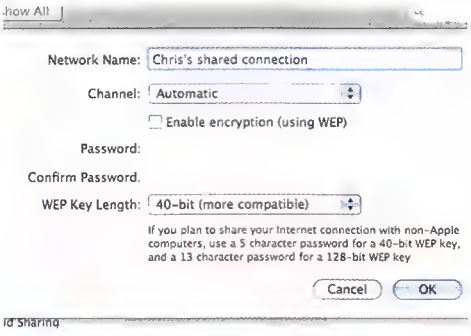
02 Let's set up the connection. If you're using a USB modem, you need to install drivers and follow the setup instructions that came with it. You'll probably have to start the connection from the **Network** pane of *System Preferences* (using *Internet Connect* in pre-10.5 systems), though you could set **PPP** options to initiate automatically.



03 Open *System Preferences* and click on the **Sharing** icon. (We're using Leopard here, but the process is broadly the same in earlier versions.) First, pick the port that you'll be sharing over AirPort from the **Share your connection from** menu. Ours is **Vodafone E172**, but the name of yours will change depending on the device you're using.

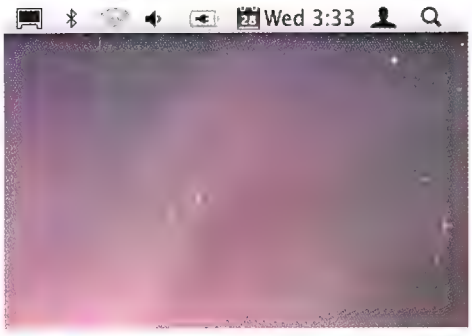


04 Next, pick the port you want to share your connection over. We're going to broadcast the connection over AirPort, so check that option from the **To computers using** list. Of course, you could also reverse these settings to use another Mac on your network to pipe its wireless connection to another device that doesn't have WiFi capabilities.



05 We now want to configure a few options for the wireless network that you're about to create to share your connection, so click the **AirPort Options** button to bring down the config sheet. Give the network a name; something that's unique and memorable will make it easy to pick out this network should there be many around.

06 You can also set a WEP password to protect the network. You have the option of setting a 40-bit key that requires a password five characters long, or a 128-bit key that requires 13 characters. It can mix letters and numbers and, given the weakness of WEP anyway, you should never chose the 40-bit option; it can be cracked very easily.

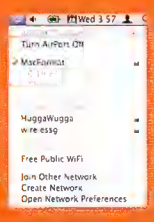


07 Accept the changes then check the box next to **Internet Sharing** in the left-most pane. You'll get a warning checking that you have the rights to share your connection – in this instance, the administrator is you – then when you confirm, you'll see the AirPort icon in your menu bar change to show that you've used it to create a network.

08 Now all you have to do is to connect to the network you've created. You should be able to connect from essentially any WiFi-capable device on the market, including, of course, Macs, PCs, iPhones and iPod touches. The little padlock symbol that appears next to the network name shows that it's secured, in this case with a 128-bit WEP key.

TOOL SCHOOL

Hold down the ⌥ key on the Mac keyboard when you click on the AirPort menu, and you get some extra information about the base station you're connected to, such as the channel its transmitting on, the MAC address of the base station and its transfer rate.



EXPERT TIP

It's annoying that the only encryption option you have when sharing an internet connection is WEP. WPA is much more secure – WEP can be cracked in minutes.

Take control of Apple Mail

Teach Apple's Mail program to manage your emails using Rules and Smart Mailboxes

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- Mac OS X 10.5 or above (£85, www.apple.com/uk/thestore)
- Some emails to search for

Without any additional software, you can create Rules in *Mail* that will sort emails, take steps on your behalf, and make it vastly easier to find that one message you need out of the thousands of emails in your Inbox. For example, if you know you'll want to refer to a certain colleague's emails on your webmail account, but you don't want to have to remember to forward them at the end of every day, you can set up a *Mail* Rule to do it for you.

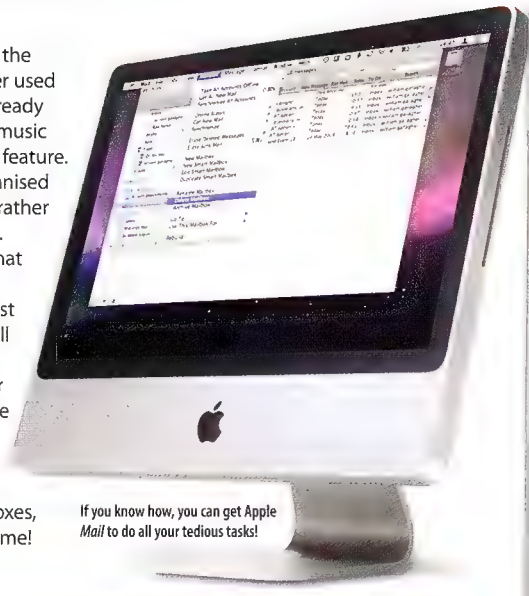
Alternatively, if you hate hearing that *Mail* bleep, but there's one urgent email you're waiting for, a Rule lets you set a sound for just that one. Or, if you routinely get a lot of email every day, you can use a Rule to mark ones from clients red and ones from your bank green.

You can also create Smart Mailboxes. These are searches that will update themselves intelligently based on the criteria you specified. If you've ever used Smart Playlists in *iTunes*, you've already seen how your Mac can organise music for you. *Mail* has exactly the same feature.

Smart Mailboxes keep you organised without taking up the time you'd rather spend on getting your work done. Just search once for every email that came from your boss, that has an attachment and was sent in the last six weeks, and a Smart Mailbox will keep a constantly updated list of these emails. They will stay in your Inbox, but also be listed right there with every other matching email in the Smart Mailbox.

So, just follow this tutorial on setting up Rules and Smart Mailboxes, and you'll be a *Mail* expert in no time!

William Gallagher



If you know how, you can get Apple *Mail* to do all your tedious tasks!

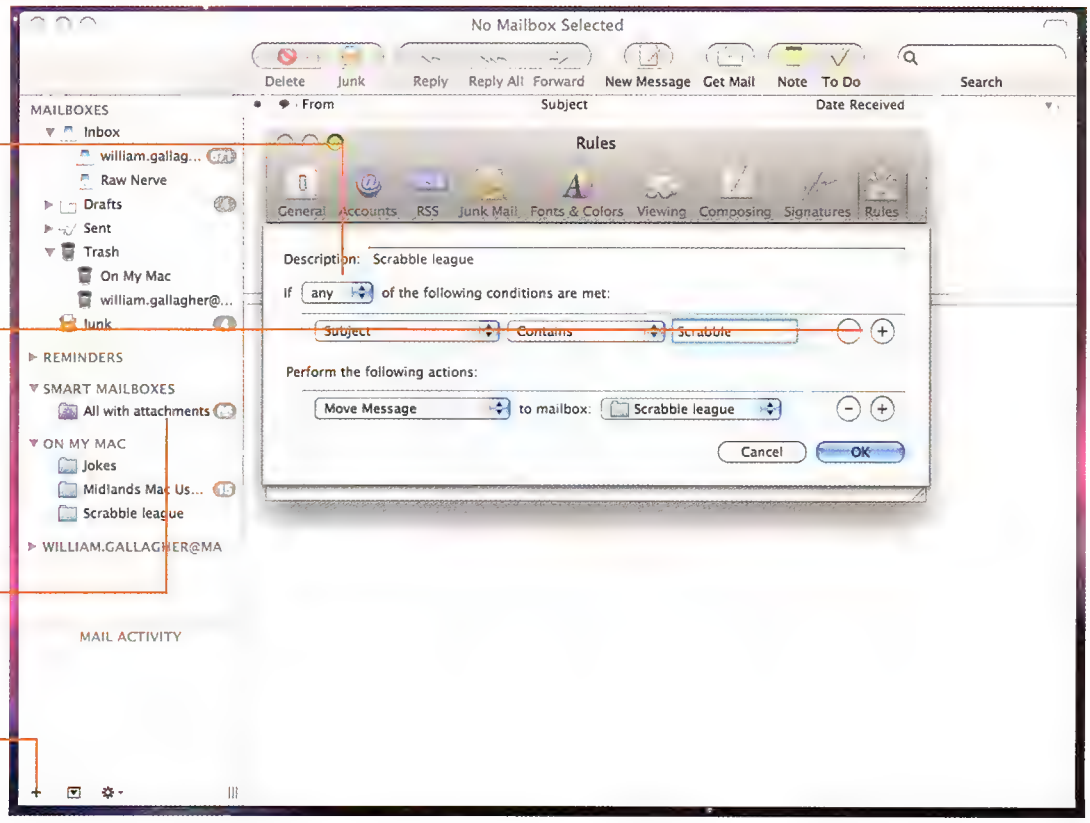
TOP FEATURES | The Rules dialog box in Mail's Preferences

Choose your target
Set this to **Any** and you can have a whole slew of conditions, or to **All** when you want to highlight only very particular emails.

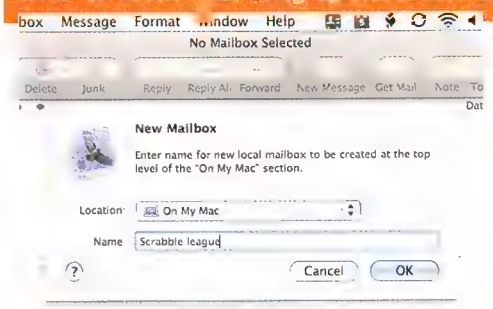
Add conditions
Keep clicking on this to add condition after condition: emails from particular people, sent at certain times, carrying attachments and much more.

Give Mail a playlist
Just like an *iTunes* Smart Playlist, you can make mailboxes that contain certain messages – but don't move them out of your Inbox.

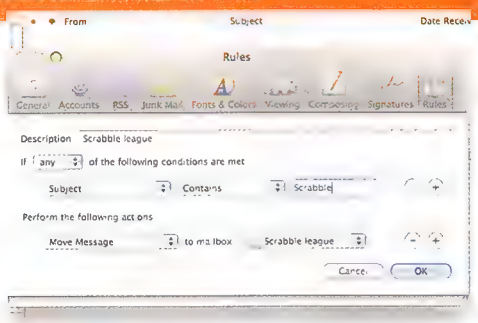
Hunt it high and low
This little plus sign may be buried down at the bottom of your Inbox, but it's the quickest route to creating Smart Mailboxes.



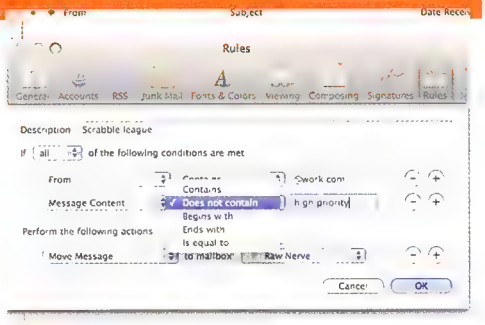
STEP BY STEP Setting up Rules and Smart Mailboxes in Mail



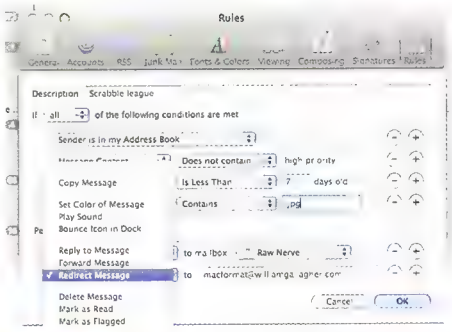
01 Everything you need is in Preferences > Rules – bar the most important. Rules let you parcel off your emails into Mailboxes, but you can't create those within the **Rules** dialog box. So, go to Mailbox > Create New Mailbox. Just give it a short, memorable name, and in the **Location** drop-down be sure to choose **On My Mac.**



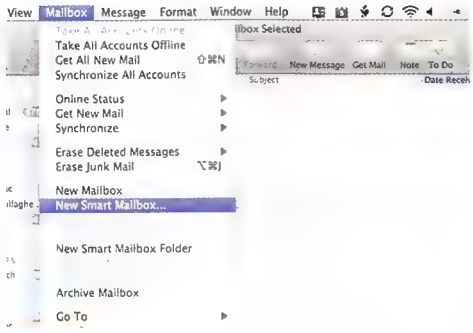
02 Go to **Preferences**, choose **Rules** and then click **Add Rule**. This is where you'll do most of your work. The first half is about finding emails – this one looks for any emails with "Scrabble" in the subject – and the second is what you want *Mail* to do with what you find (in this case, move them to the **Scrabble** Mailbox).



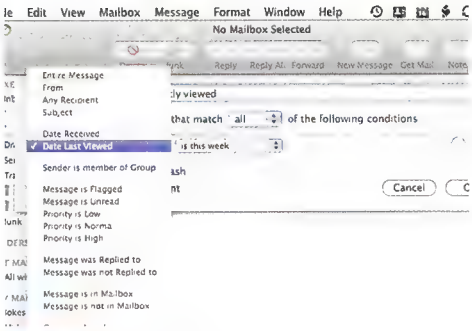
03 This one searches for messages sent by anyone from a particular company – never miss an email just because someone new has joined your client's firm. In this example, the client's email system specifies priority: you could choose to ignore high-priority messages in this Rule so that you can set up a separate one for those later.



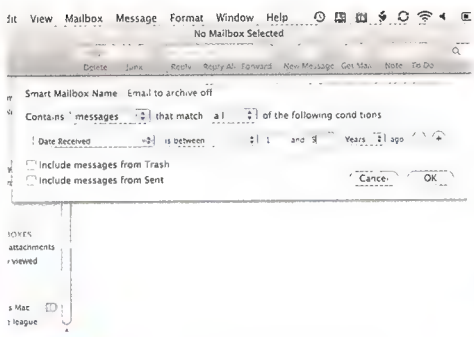
04 Besides an automatic reply, there are 12 other options, and you could choose them all if you really needed to. You could even set *Mail* to delete every message you ever receive if you weren't careful. Don't let a Rule delete anything until you've seen it working; get it to move messages to a temporary Mailbox while you test it.



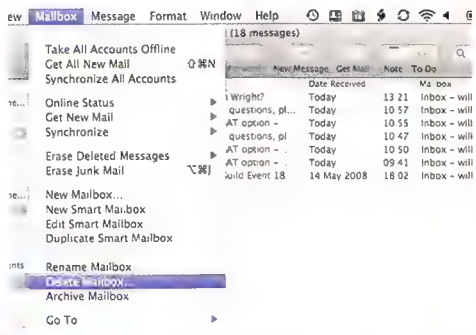
05 Under the Mailbox > New Mailbox option, there's **New Smart Mailbox**. Smart Mailboxes are constantly updated, just like Smart Playlists. You name your Smart Mailbox and tell it what kind of message should automatically go into it. You specify this in the same way as Rules, but Smart Mailboxes have different options..



06 This Smart Mailbox is simple but very useful. Choose **Date Last Viewed** and set it to **This Week**; all this week's work, plus that message from six months ago that you referred to, are now all in one place. Click the plus sign and add further conditions to pick last week's emails that you haven't replied to yet.

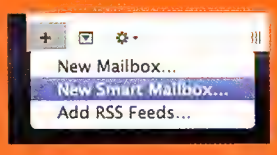


07 If you never delete messages, *Mail* slows down. So, make a Smart Mailbox of all messages over a year old. Unfortunately, *Mail* can't do this directly: you have to say between 1 and another number of years. Now your Smart Mailbox has everything you might reasonably get rid of, and you can choose **Mailbox/Archive Mailbox**.



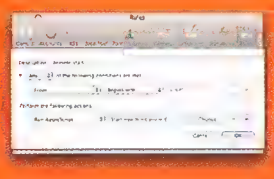
08 Smart Mailboxes help you organise; they don't affect what's in your Inbox – with one crucial exception. Unlike *iTunes* playlists, if you click on a message in a Smart Mailbox and delete it, it really is deleted. Make sure you delete old Smart Mailboxes here in the **Mailbox** menu, which also lets you rename or organise them into groups.

TOOL SCHOOL



Did you even notice it was there? That little plus sign at the bottom-left of *Mail* is the quick way to add Smart Mailboxes. When you've set some up, you can simply double-click on them to edit.

EXPERT TIP



Use Rules to control anything on a Mac! Email yourself from your iPhone and trigger a Rule that runs an AppleScript.

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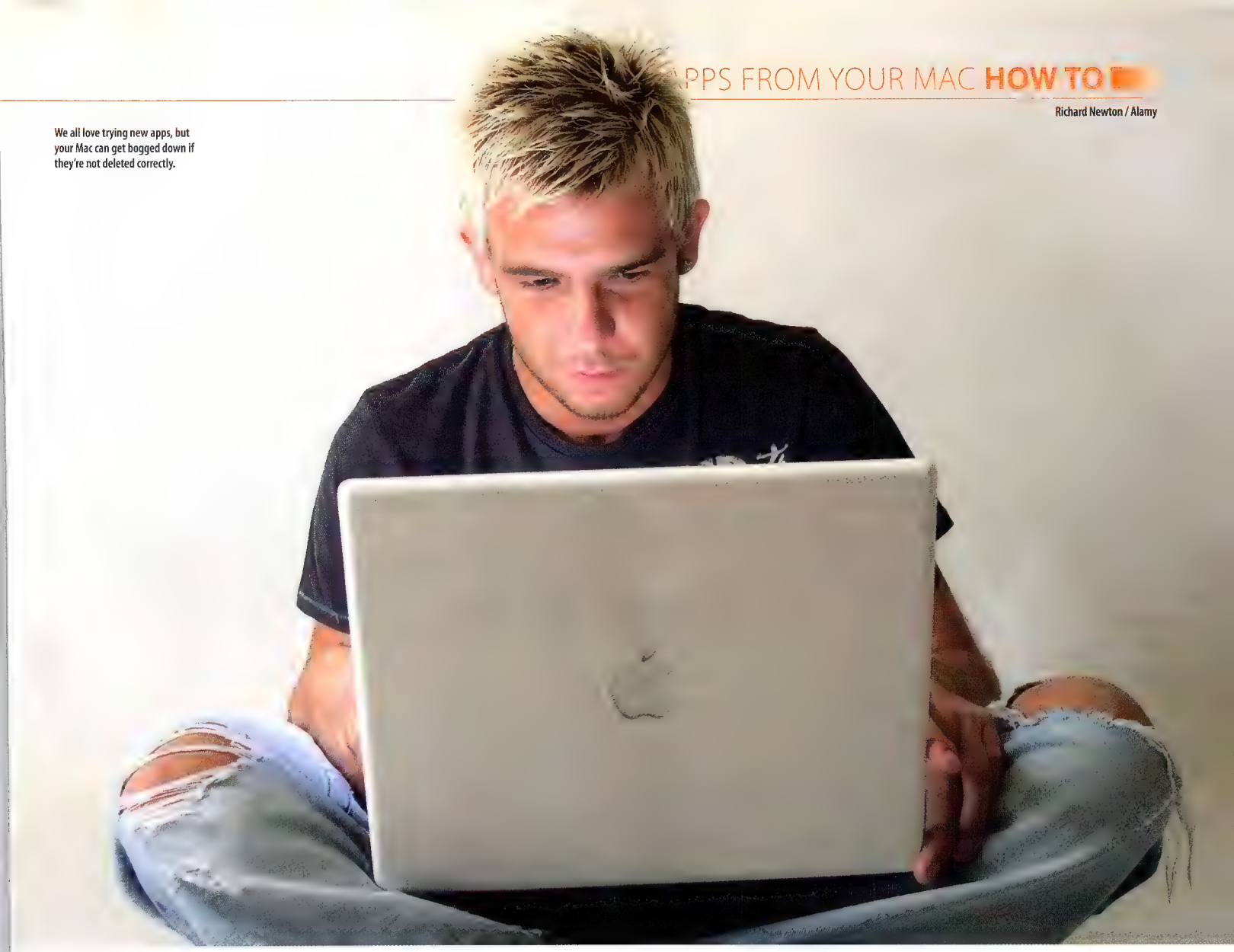


Richard Newton / Alamy

We all love trying new apps, but your Mac can get bogged down if they're not deleted correctly.

Uninstall apps from your Mac

Removing unwanted applications from your Mac can be tricky, so we reveal the secrets of the experts

There are now thousands of pieces of software for Mac OS X – over 7,200 universal applications alone at the last count. Many of these are reasonably priced shareware or donationware titles, while some are completely free (open source or freeware). That's great, but what happens if you've been trying out a couple of shareware titles that do the same job, and you've now decided which one you want to keep?

Well, you could try dragging the unwanted application from the **Applications** folder on your Mac's hard disk to the Trash, then emptying the Trash. That's fine, but with many apps this only gets rid of the most obvious part – the application itself – and often leaves behind files that not only take up space on your hard disk, they can also cause conflicts with other apps.

In this tutorial, we'll show you what those extra files are, what they're for, and what steps you can take to ensure that they're all eliminated when you need to uninstall the application. First, though, let's take a look at the ways of installing applications in Mac OS X and how this affects the contents of your hard disk.

Where does it all go?

Most of the time, when you install programs on your Mac, you'll be using one of two methods: first of all, there's drag-and-drop installation. As the name implies, this involves simply dragging the application icon from the *Finder* window into Mac OS X's **Applications** folder. To make things simpler, some developers include a neat alias for the **Applications** folder within the *Finder* window that opens when you double-click on the mounted installation disk or disk image.

> "Dragging an app to the Trash is fine, but it leaves behind files that take up space and can cause conflicts"

In the case of most drag-and-drop installations (there are exceptions), it's pretty obvious that all that's been installed is the application itself. However, when you launch the application for the first time, it's likely that it will create a plist file. Mac OS X's plist (short for 'property list') files store your preferred settings for an application; they're stored in ~ > Library > Preferences (by the way, that tilde (~) is Mac OS X shorthand for 'the **Home** folder of the currently logged-in user'). This means that each account holder with access to the application ▶

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- A Mac running Mac OS X 10.4 or 10.5
- A system backup
- *AppZapper* and *Hazel* (on the disc)

You'll find *AppZapper* and *Hazel* on the disc

QUICK TIP

Where's the sidebar?
Picture this: you've downloaded some new shareware and it's mounted on the Desktop. The instructions say to drop the icon on your **Applications** folder – but there's no **Applications** folder icon because there's no sidebar. You could open a new *Finder* window; however, if you click the small, rectangular expansion button in the top-right corner of the *Finder* window (or use the keyboard shortcut ⌘+⌥+[T]), the sidebar will magically reappear.

will have a plist file for that application in his or her **Preferences** folder.

By now you're probably getting the idea that even when things seem to be straightforward, they very often aren't. It gets even more complex with the next type of installation, the one that uses an installer package file.

Installer package files

Installer package (.pkg or .mpkg) files have a generic icon that looks like an opened box. They are used for installing those applications with files that need to be installed in a number of locations on your Mac's hard disk.

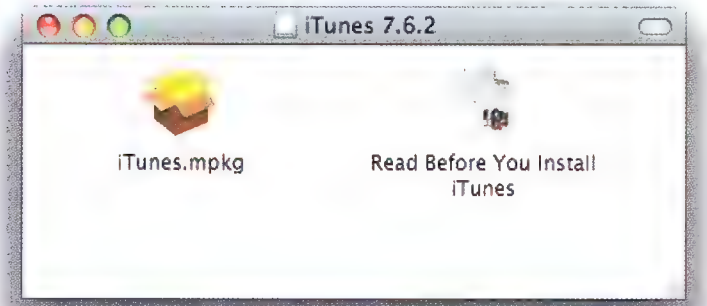
To install from a .pkg or .mpkg file, double-click the installer icon, and all the files will be installed in the correct place on your Mac's hard disk. It'll help if we look at a specific example here, and one that most users are familiar with is *iTunes*.

If you download the *iTunes* installer from **www.apple.com/uk/itunes/download** and double-click on the disk image (.dmg) you'll find that it contains a .mpkg file, which is an installer that contains multiple .pkg files: if you want to check this out for yourself, right-click on the file **iTunes.mpkg** and choose **Show Package Contents**. Next, double-click on the **Resources** folder, and you'll see that it contains a number of .pkg files, among them **AppleMobileDeviceSupport.pkg** and **iTunesX.pkg**.

Package files use Mac OS X's *Installer* application to complete their work, which might include putting helper files in, for instance, ~ > Library > Application Support. When the installation is complete, *Installer* will place a file called a Bill of Materials (.bom) in Library > Receipts > boms, together with a .pkg file in Library > Receipts. The .bom files contain a list of files installed by each package, together with a record of the correct permissions for each file. They're used whenever you use *Disk Utility* to check and repair permissions, and should on no account be deleted.

Some applications installed using the drag-and-drop method also include an alias of Mac OS X's **Applications** folder.

A package file is used to install more complex applications, and will place files in multiple locations on your hard disk.

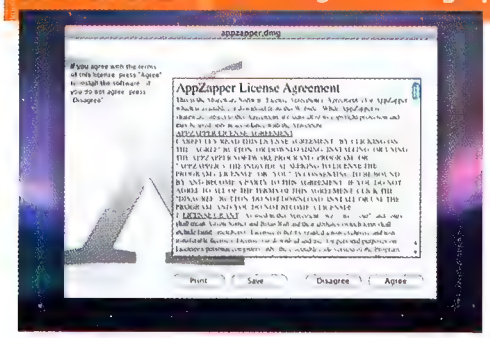


> "The .bom files contain a list of files installed by each package, and they should on no account be deleted"

Undoing it all

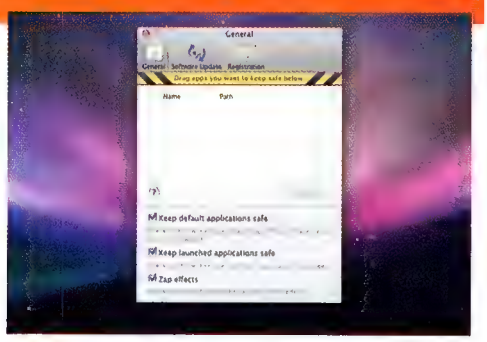
We always think it's a good sign when a developer includes a convenient way of uninstalling their work: not only is it a courtesy towards users, but it can also be seen as a sign of confidence on the part of the developer. Your first steps when you want to uninstall anything should be

STEP BY STEP Installing and using AppZapper



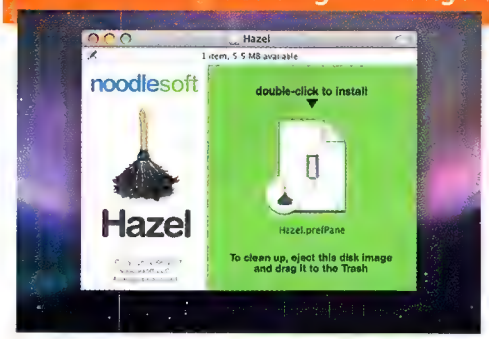
01 If you're in need of a little help in getting rid of all your unwanted applications, we've included a couple of contrasting programs, *AppZapper* and *Hazel*, to help you on this month's disc. To install *AppZapper*, first double-click on its disk image, and when you're asked, click **Agree** to the terms of the licence.

02 When the disk image mounts, install *AppZapper* by dragging its icon across to the **Applications** folder alias in the same *Finder* window. Close the *Finder* window and eject the mounted disk image by dragging it to the Trash. If you want to save disk space, delete the .dmg file by dragging it to the Trash and emptying it.



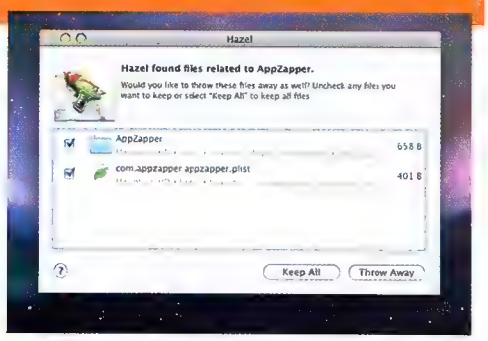
03 Launch *AppZapper* from the **Applications** folder. You can use the **General** preferences to protect third-party apps from being removed: Apple applications such as *iPhoto* and *iTunes* are already protected. When you want to uninstall an app, drag its icon from **Applications** onto the *AppZapper* window and it will be deleted.

STEP BY STEP Installing and using Hazel



01 *Hazel* integrates itself into Mac OS X's Trash. Once you've double-clicked on its disk image, a *Finder* window containing a single **Preferences** pane will open. Double-click the **Preferences** pane, and you'll be asked whether you want to install it for yourself only, or all users. Make your choice, click **Install**, and *Hazel* will install itself.

02 Go to System Preferences > Hazel, and you can customise *Hazel*'s settings. To enable *Hazel* to uninstall applications, click on the **Trash** tab. Place a tick in the checkbox next to **Enable App Sweep**. This will prompt *Hazel* to use Spotlight to search your Mac's hard disk for files related to any application you have placed in the Trash.



03 *Hazel* in action: here, it has picked up on the fact that *AppZapper* has been dropped in the Trash, and is offering to delete related files. One word of caution here: if any application you are attempting to delete has any processes running – even if the application itself isn't running – you might have problems emptying the Trash.

to check either the Read Me file that might have been included with the application, or the application's **Help** menu. Failing that, the support section of the developer's website might offer you a clue, or you could try emailing them directly: don't just stumble into the job without thinking, or you could end up deleting something you shouldn't. Oh, and please make sure you've backed up your system before you try to delete anything from your hard disk.

When you run an application installer, there are frequently a couple of options in a pop-up menu: **Easy Install**, which will give you the default installation; and **Custom Install**, which allows you to add or remove elements according to your needs. Sometimes, these are joined by a third option: **Uninstall**. As a first check, if you're unsure, it's often worth running the installer again in order to look for this option. These days, you might even find that you are given two explicit choices when you run an installer: **Install** or **Uninstall**. Intego's *VirusBarrier* is one application that offers such a choice. The benefit of this method is that, because the developer has provided it, it should remove all the files that were originally installed.

> "Bundled uninstaller apps will avoid potential conflicts of old and new files and save your sanity"

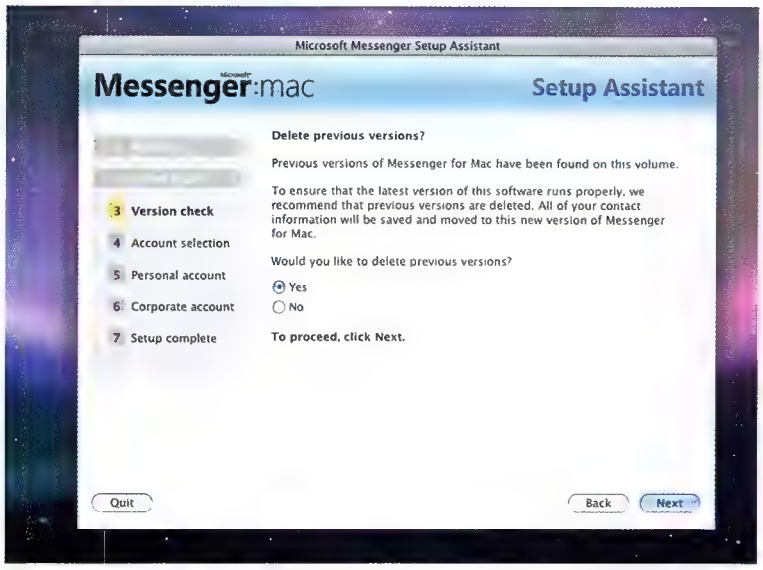
Uninstaller applications

Often, when you download an application, or buy it on disc, there'll be a separate uninstaller application bundled with it. To give just one example, *Flip4Mac* – the utility that enables Mac support for Microsoft's Windows Media files – includes such an uninstaller package. For those of a cautious disposition, this allows complete removal of an old version of an application or utility before the installation of a new version. Not only does this avoid potential conflicts of old and new files, ▸

QUICK TIP

Open the package

Sometimes you might need to reinstall a single item from a .mpkg file – an installer package containing multiple files. You might, for instance, be having problems with a new release of *Safari*, and want to revert to the previous one. If this sounds familiar, *Pacifist* (shareware; around £10, from **www.charlessoft.com**) is your new best friend, as it will allow you to open up Leopard's – or any other – installer to install a single item.



Microsoft *Messenger for Mac's* installer will search for and uninstall previous versions, helping your Mac run more smoothly.

WHAT ARE DISK IMAGES?

Often, when you download an application, you'll receive it as a disk image (.dmg). You can think of a disk image as a virtual CD or DVD; it is a format that's used extensively with Mac OS X, and one worth getting to know.

Once you've double-clicked a disk image, it will mount on your Desktop in a new *Finder* window and you can install the application. Once you've finished, eject the mounted disk image from your Desktop by dragging it to the Trash, after which you can delete the disk image itself.

If you want to keep a permanent copy of the program, you can use *Disk Utility* to burn a disc from one of these images: launch *Disk Utility* (from Applications > Utilities), then choose File > Open Disk Image. Choose the image you want to mount, and it will immediately appear in the sidebar of *Disk Utility*; click on its icon, choose Burn from the toolbar, and insert a blank disc.

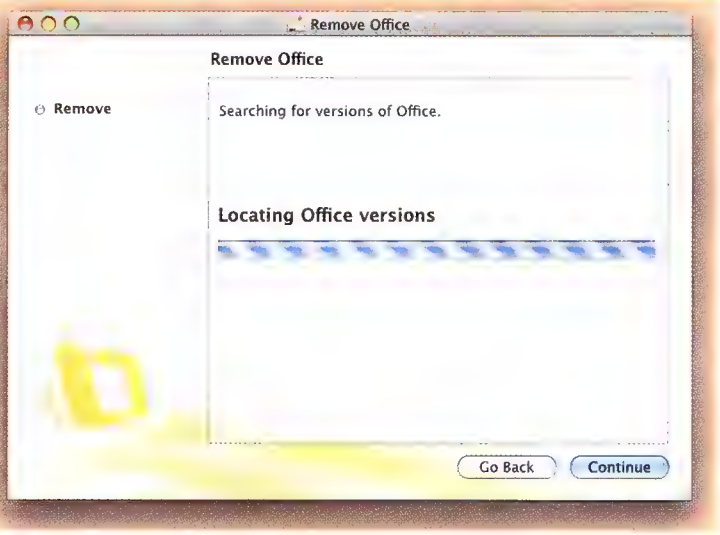
Many applications – such as *SuperDuper!* – are downloaded as disk images

UNINSTALLING TRIALS | Hassle-free ways to work with old and new software

It's happened to many of us: your new Mac comes with a demo version of a major software package – Microsoft *Office*, say, or *Dreamweaver*. Maybe you even downloaded a 30-day trial version of one of those packages yourself. Either way, once the demo has expired, you buy the application and install it on your Mac, only to find that it tells you you're running an expired version, and it's now going to quit. It's the sort of thing that's going to ruin anyone's day.

This kind of problem can be avoided by properly uninstalling the demo version of the application before installing the full version. Both Microsoft *Office* and *Dreamweaver* are complex applications that install helper files throughout your **Home** folder, and are difficult – though not impossible – to remove manually if you don't know what you're looking for. Fortunately, when you try to install *Office 2008*, the *Office Installer* searches for previous versions of the application suite before prompting you to remove them. As if that weren't enough, *Office 2008* (like the version that preceded it) has a dedicated removal tool, located in Applications > Microsoft Office 2008 > Additional Tools > Remove Office.

If you do have a demo version of an application installed on your Mac, and you decide to go for the full package, we'd suggest getting rid of every element of the demo installation before going any further. If you need to, take a look at the support pages for the product; chances are that others have had the same problem and the answer is there waiting for you. Oh yes, and you'll find info on uninstalling the *Dreamweaver* demo at **www.adobe.com/go/tn_13302**.



Microsoft includes a dedicated tool for removing previous versions of *Office* with every copy of *Office 2008*.

QUICK TIP

Get organised with Hazel

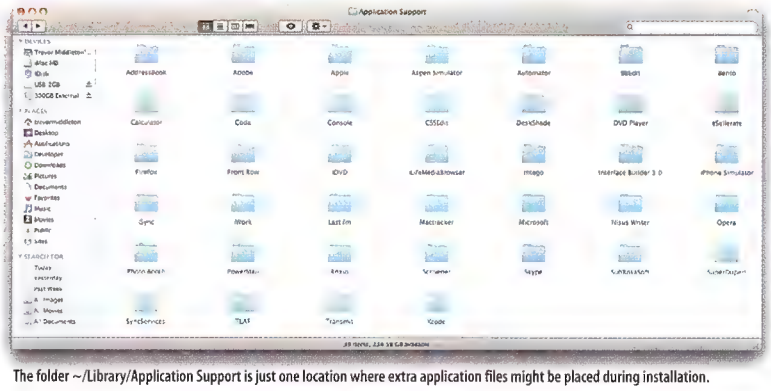
Hazel has more than one string to its bow. As well as uninstalling your applications, it will also act as a file manager, using Spotlight to allow you to set up rules for organising everything on your Mac.

but it could also go a long way towards saving your sanity (see 'Uninstalling trials' at the top of this page).

Manual removal

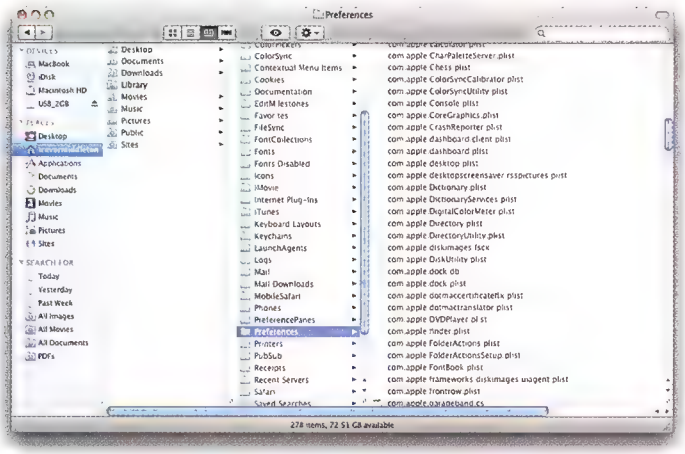
Sometimes, there's no alternative to rolling up your sleeves and getting a job done the hard way. Most developers know that users' needs change, and at some point they might want to remove an application. That's why you'll often come across detailed instructions for manual removal on the developer's website; if not, an email asking for help will usually elicit a sympathetic response. *Google Earth*'s website, for instance, has full information about which files to delete from your hard disk in order to remove all of its components. Go to **http://tinyurl.com/4y4csn**.

If you're still unsure how to go about uninstalling a particular application, you can always get a utility to do the job for you. There are a number of these around; we think two of the best are *Hazel* (shareware; around £12 from **www.noodlesoft.com/hazel.php**) and *AppZapper* (shareware; around £7, from **http://appzapper.com**). As well as including both on this month's DVD, there are quick guides to using each of them on pages 54 and 55.



The folder ~/Library/Application Support is just one location where extra application files might be placed during installation.

You may have heard of .plist files. These are created by a program to store your preferred settings. You'll find them in ~ > Library > Preferences.



Finally, if, like us, you enjoy trying out different shareware and freeware applications, it's always a good idea to make a complete backup of your hard disk before making any changes to your system. You could use *Time Machine* to restore your system, but we reckon cloning your main system disk to an external hard disk using *Carbon Copy Cloner* (donationware, from **www.bombich.com/software/ccc.html**) or *Super Duper!* (shareware; around £15, from **www.shirt-pocket.com/SuperDuper**) is still pretty much unbeatable. Plus, of course, it's a method you can use if you have a version of Mac OS X earlier than Leopard.

> "If, like us, you enjoy trying out shareware and freeware apps, it's a good idea to back up your hard disk first"

Back up and spring clean

You can use either of the above applications to make a complete, bootable clone of your hard disk, so that if anything goes wrong you can start up from your external disk. In order to do this, you'll need a disk with a FireWire connector if you have a PowerPC Mac, while an Intel Mac can start up from a USB 2.0 disk.

As we said at the beginning, one of the joys of using Mac OS X is the sheer number of great applications that are now available. With a bit of strategic planning (and a couple of helper applications) there's no reason why you shouldn't make the most of all that's on offer – and keep your Mac uncluttered and relatively trouble-free!

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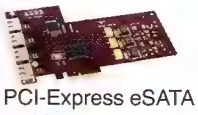
eSATA Cards



- Sonnet Tempo SATA E4P - PCI-Express eSATA Card with Port Multiplier £185 + Vat
- Sonnet Tempo- E2P eSATA (2 PM external) Expansion Card £45 + Vat

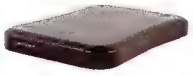
eSATA Enclosures

- Sonnet Fusion D500P 5-Bay eSATA Enclosure with Port Multiplier £325 + Vat

External Storage

Desktop or portable; FireWire 400, 800 or USB 2.0 we've got the external drive you need

Formac



Formac Disk XTR
Fast, ultra quiet FireWire 800/400 storage.. Available in Oxygen or Raven

- 1TB FireWire 800/400 - £201 + Vat
- 1.5TB FireWire 800/400 - £293 + Vat

Formac Disk Mini
Bus-powered FireWire & USB 2.0 portable storage. Available in Oxygen, Platinum or Raven

- 80GB FireWire & USB 2.0 - £49 + Vat Price Drop
- 120GB FireWire & USB 2.0 - £61 + Vat Price Drop
- 160GB FireWire & USB 2.0 - £72 + Vat Price Drop

ATi Graphics Cards

Now FINALLY back in stock ATI Upgrade cards for your Mac Desktop.

- Radeon 9600 (QS+MD)- £125 + Vat
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Get more from the menu bar

The OS X menu bar is easily accessible but underused. Get more out of it with these killer apps

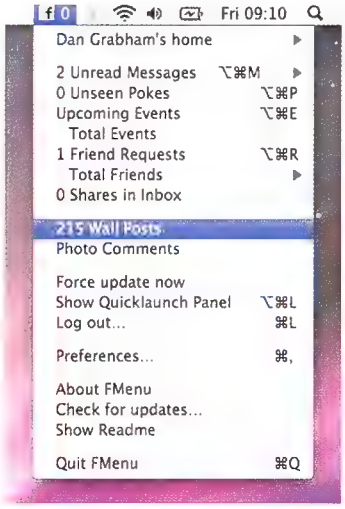
WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- Access to a broadband or wireless internet connection
- The accompanying software on the disc

The software featured here is on the disc

The menu bar has been a stalwart of OS X since its first version. Very little was added to it with each subsequent release until the menu bar became translucent in OS X 10.5 Leopard. This instantly divided opinion, and in the 10.5.2 update Apple added the option to turn off this translucency effect, to the relief of many. Install the latest 10.5.3 update and look in System Preferences > Desktop & Screen Saver, and you'll see a new checkbox added to the bottom of the **Desktop** panel.

Apple's meddling with the menu bar inspired us to think of more creative ways to make use of it, and we've decided to write a tutorial showing you some of the different ways you can customise your menu bar. We've also discovered that there are several great programs out there for adding features to it.



Bring Facebook to your menu bar with *FMenu* (see step 6).

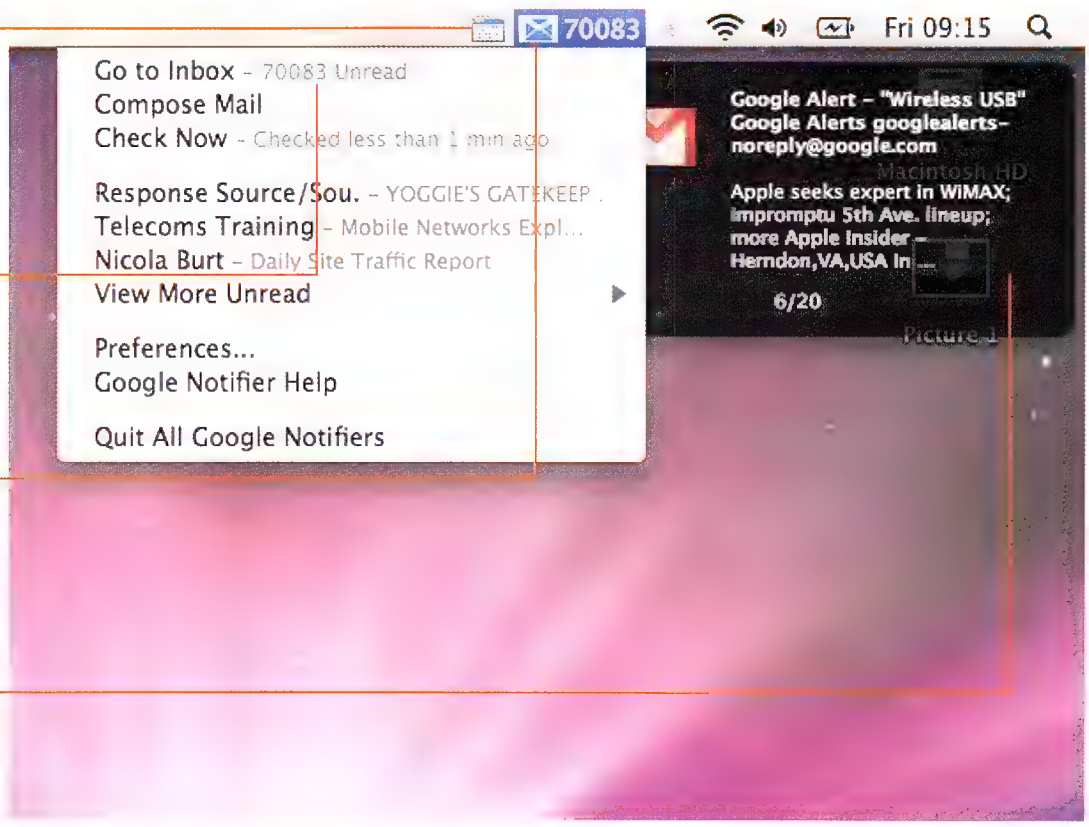
The OS X menu bar is rarely used to its full potential. On a cluttered Desktop, and with our tips here, you'll find that it can provide you with instant access to some key areas of your Mac without you having to go digging in the **Applications** folder or *System Preferences*.

One of the most useful add-on apps we've found for the menu bar is *Google Notifier* (**http://toolbar.google.com/gmail-helper/notifier_mac.html**), which is what we'll kick things off with below. It displays alerts for new emails, quick previews of new Gmail messages, and also timely reminders from Google's online Calendar.

There are plenty of other apps for customising your menu bar, too. Just follow the tutorial opposite and check out the featured software along the way.

Dan Grabham

TOP FEATURES | Access Gmail from the menu bar using Google Notifier



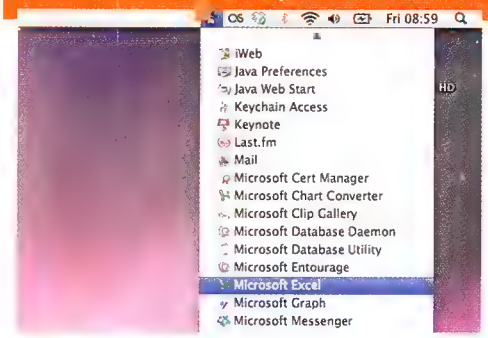
Get to your Google Calendar
By using this mini-calendar icon in the menu bar, you can quickly access the latest data on your agenda in one click.

New mail notification
At a glance, you can view exactly how many mails you have waiting. As you can see, we have rather a lot. Er, 70,083, to be precise.

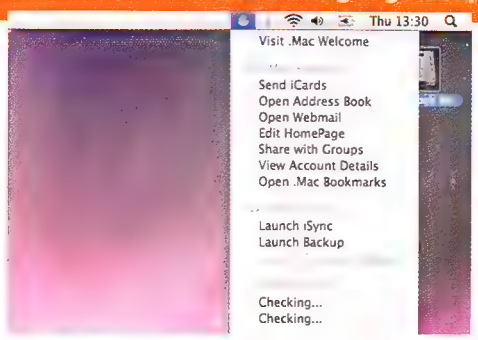
Access your Inbox
Click the little envelope icon to view the menu, then access your Inbox directly from there – you can also write a new message.

Pop-up emails
If you've got *Growl* installed (see **http://growl.info/**), when you get a new mail you can view a pop-up summary of the message.

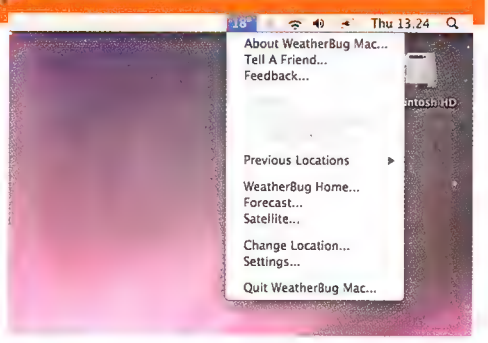
STEP BY STEP Give your menu bar a new lease of life with these eight great apps



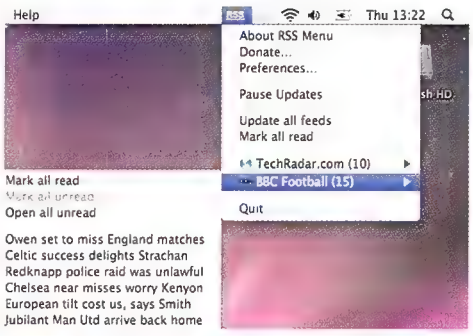
01 *TigerLaunch* (**www.ranchero.com/tigerlaunch**) is an application launcher that sits in the menu bar. It's useful for accessing those apps that you don't have space for in your Dock, and enables you to be more choosy about what goes in it. *TigerLaunch* automatically detects when you install a new app and adds it to the menu.



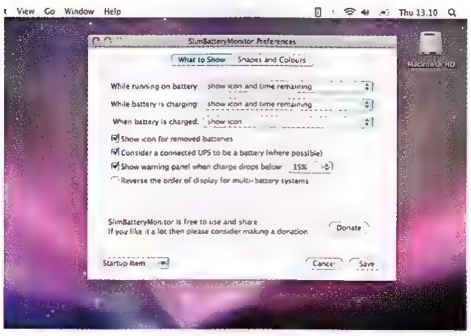
02 .Mac might be useful, but why waste time navigating *System Preferences* to find out how much space your disk has left? *dotMac menu* (**www.infinitenexus.com/dmm**) changes all that, consolidating all the various elements of .Mac into a single menu. You can get direct access to each part of .Mac, as well as your preferences and status.



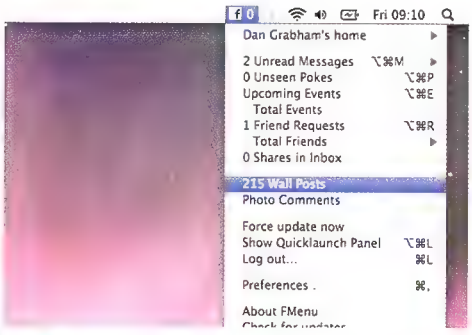
03 This handy app sits in the menu bar and gives you the latest weather updates for your location. *WeatherBug Lite* (**http://weather.weatherbug.com/desktop-weather/weatherbug-mac.html**) also enables you to display the temperature in Celsius or Fahrenheit, and access a more detailed forecast online.



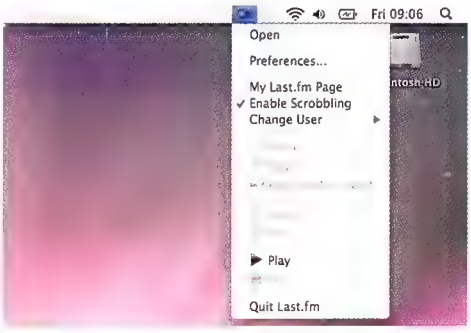
04 Available from **www.edot-studios.com**, *RSS Menu* enables you to stay on top of your feeds directly from the menu bar. You can set how often you want them to update, plus there are numerous menu customisation options. You can also choose whether you want to be notified when the feeds are updated, and group feeds in categories.



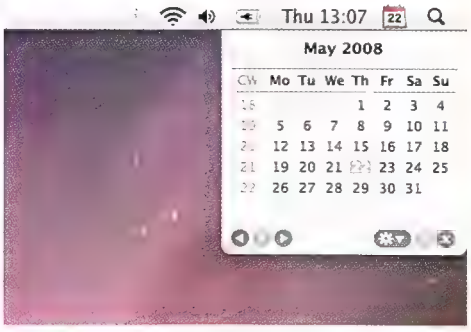
05 *SlimBatteryMonitor* (**www.orange-carb.org/SBM/**) is more than a replacement for Apple's laptop battery-life monitor – it's a lot more configurable than the standard OS X provision. It also takes up less room, enabling you to fit more on your menu bar. Older PowerBooks are supported too, but you'll need OS X 10.3 or later.



06 *FMenu* (**http://wiki.lensovet.byethost12.com/FMenu**) is for the Facebook addict. It's a drop-down menu that signs you into Facebook and lets you access friends and events, as well as check your messages. The app uses *Growl* (**http://growl.info/**) to function, but if you don't have it, you can get it as part of the *FMenu* download.



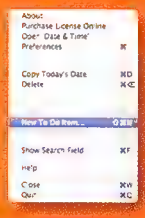
07 Listen to a lot of music? Then download *Last.fm* (**www.last.fm**). It's a social music aggregator, meaning that it logs what you listen to (on your Mac or iPod) and recommends similar artists. You can listen to Last.fm radio directly from your menu bar, listen to recommendations, or hear what your friends are listening to.



08 *MenuCalendarClock* (**www.objectpark.net/mcc.html**) is a small app that offers a handy way to access your *iCal* data from your menu bar. It also offers a configurable clock. The basic features are free, or there's also a $20 (£10) advanced version on offer. And, if you use *Entourage* to organise your life, there's a version for you, too.

TOOL SCHOOL

[illegible]



EXPERT TIP

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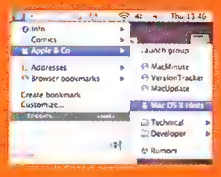


Organise your task lists

Use Dejumble to manage and group tasks via a system-wide to-do list

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- A copy of *Dejumble* (on the disc)
- Apple *iCal* (free with Mac OS X)
- Some things to do
- Ten minutes to set everything up

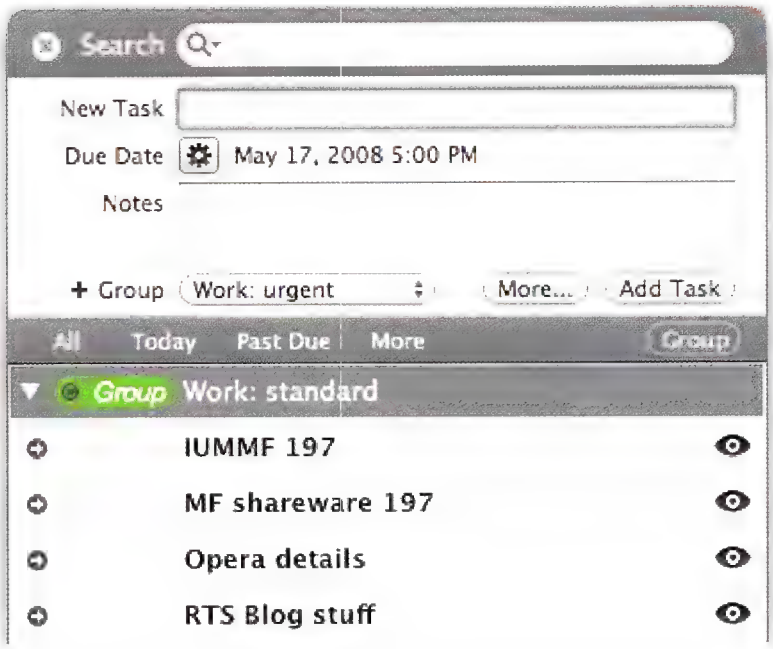
Find *Dejumble 1.1.0* on this issue's disc

There are many task-management applications and devices out there, from huge, enterprise-oriented project-management suites to the scrappy envelope covered in scribble that always manages to go missing from your desk. Somewhere in between is *Dejumble* (reviewed on p100), a task manager that sits in the menu bar until needed.

The advantage of a Mac-based task list is that it's simple to keep up to date and amend without scribbling things out, and it also has the potential to integrate with other applications you might use daily. In *Dejumble*'s case, that means *iCal*, and although synchronisation with Apple's calendar app isn't entirely robust, *Dejumble* at least provides a simple, system-wide view of the current day's tasks and appointments, assuming you set it up correctly.

Quirks and bugs

At the time of writing, *Dejumble* does have a few quirks that you should probably be made aware of. The most obvious is that the date filtering of tasks only extends to *Dejumble*-originated content. *iCal* events are always restricted to the current day or nothing – no 'past due' or 'three-day outlook' for those as yet. Also, deletions don't carry across applications (which some users will no doubt consider a good thing, rather than a limitation), although status updates do.



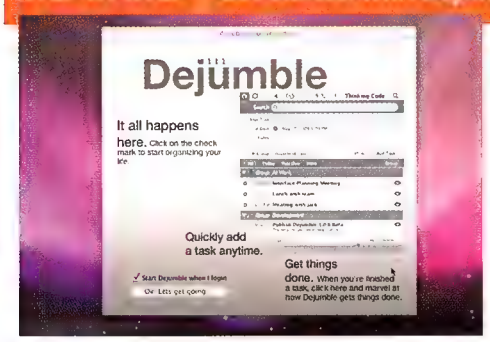
Dejumble can help you organise your day-to-day tasks and to-do lists. It can also be synchronised with Apple's own *iCal* program.

Also, *Dejumble* occasionally has a problem doing the initial synchronisation with *iCal*. If this happens (you'll know, because the sync will be taking ages), quit and restart *Dejumble*, and then try synchronising again.

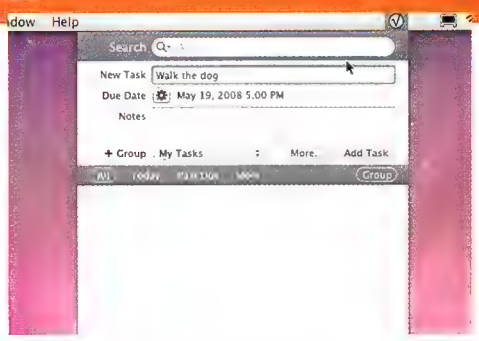
Finally, one thing we didn't get a chance to mention in the walkthrough is the **General** section of *Dejumble*'s options. Here, you can toggle whether *Dejumble* launches at login, define whether the task list stays open when *Dejumble* is in the background, and set the system-wide *Dejumble* hotkey (which is ⌘+⌥+[Z] by default).

Craig Grannell

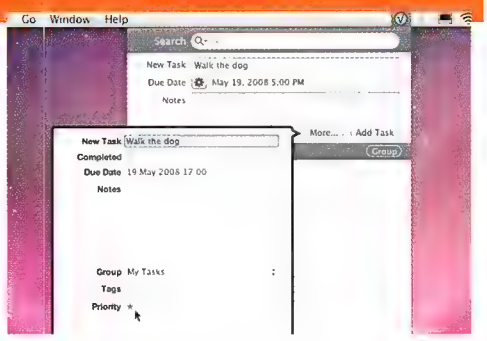
STEP BY STEP Get started with Dejumble



01 Install and launch *Dejumble*. The **Welcome to Dejumble** splash screen outlines the basics: the menu bar button to access it, the task area for adding new tasks, and the **Mark Completed** button for when a task is completed. Note the checkbox at the bottom-left, which determines whether *Dejumble* launches when you log in.

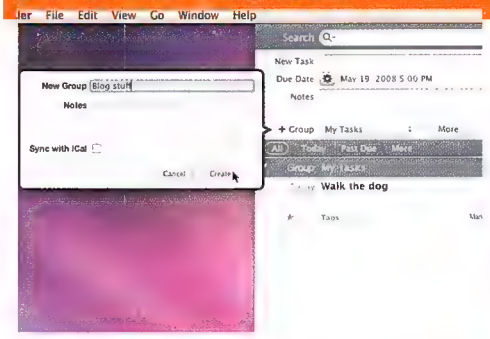


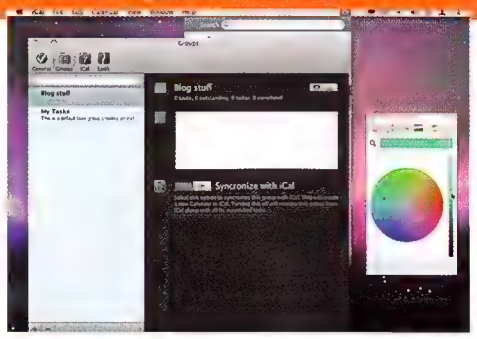
02 Click **OK** and *Dejumble* will appear in the menu bar. Click it and you'll see the full **Dejumble** window, which, by default, stays active (and appears over other onscreen content) until you click the menu bar icon for a second time. Start creating a new task by adding content to the **New Task**, **Due Date** and **Notes** fields.

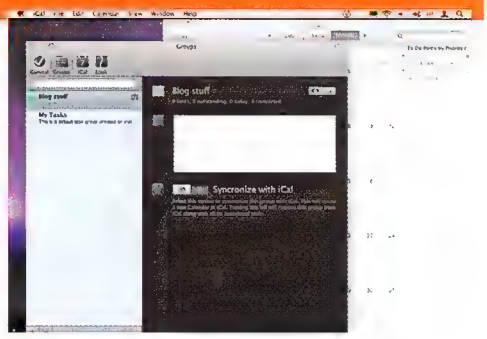


03 To access tags and priority settings for the task, click the **More...** button. Once happy with your task's details, click **Add Task** and it'll appear in the task list. Click the date and stars to edit the due date and priority, respectively, or use the 'eye' icon to edit other details or delete a task via a pop-up.

STEP BY STEP Import iCal events and fine-tune Dejumble's task list





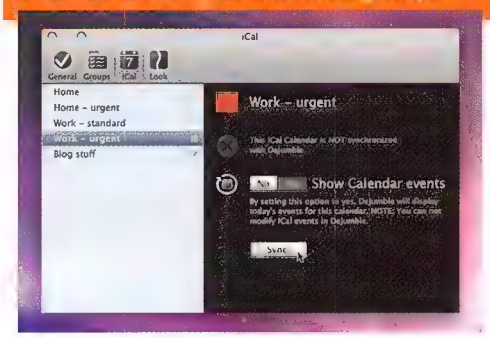


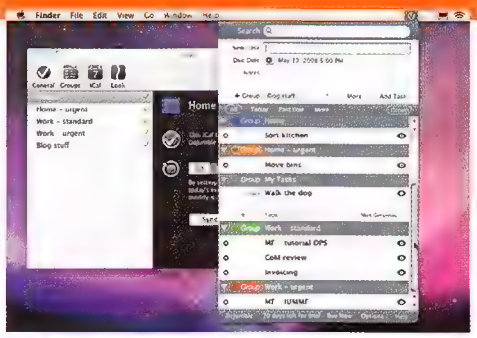
01 If your tasks relate to specific circumstances or environments (such as 'home' and 'work'), place them in groups. To create a new group, click **+ Group**, and add a name and notes in the pop-up. When creating new tasks (or editing existing ones), use the **Group** pop-up menu to assign a group and the task list will update accordingly.

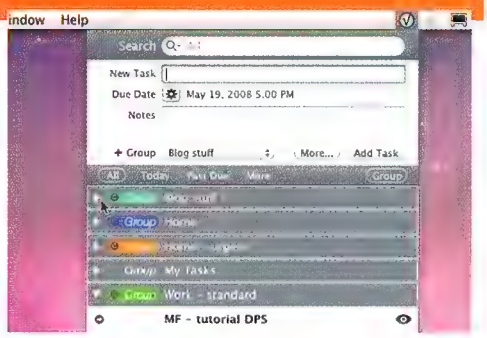
02 Click the **Options** button at the bottom of the **Dejumble** window and select the **Groups** section. Within this, each group can be further defined. Click the black square at the top-left of the right-hand pane and you can define the group's colour, enabling you to more easily differentiate each group within *Dejumble*'s task list.

03 Under the notes field for each task is a chunky off/on switch with **Syncronize with iCal** next to it. Turn this on, and, much as you'd expect, your *Dejumble* tasks are sent to *iCal*, placed in the **To Dos** column. Clicking **Mark Completed** in *Dejumble* or checking the item in *iCal* will update the task's status in both applications.

STEP BY STEP Create task groups



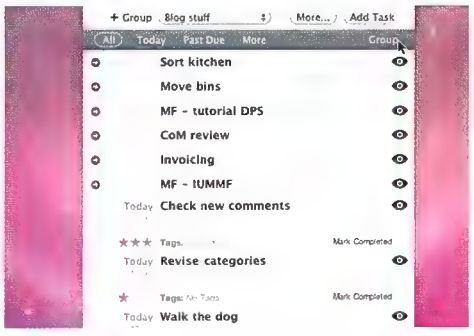


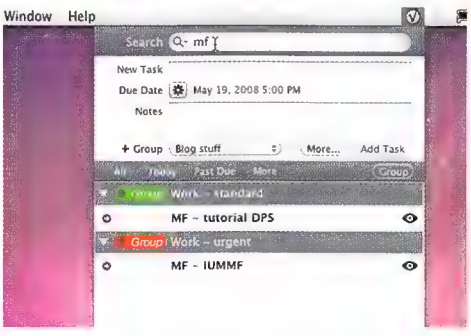


01 *Dejumble*'s relationship with *iCal* isn't just one way – it's also possible to import *iCal* events. Access *Dejumble*'s options and select the **iCal** section. Within this, you should see all of your *iCal* calendars. For each one you want to see in *Dejumble*, click the **Yes** button and **Sync!**.

02 A progress circle will appear within the **Sync!** button while your calendar entries are imported, and once *Dejumble*'s done, **Finished!** will appear. Back in the task list, you should now see your relevant *iCal* entries. Note that *iCal* events cannot be updated in *Dejumble*, but new entries added to *iCal* automatically appear.

03 With a lot of tasks and events, the task list can become busy. To prioritise a specific list, collapse the others by clicking the triangular widgets (like with a folder in *Finder*'s **List** view). You can also access the **Groups** section in *Dejumble*'s preferences, select a group and click the **Hide** button, and then click **All** above the task list.





04 Should you not want your tasks to be ordered by group, click **Group** in the bar above the list. This re-orders the list, displaying all of the tasks in chronological order, irrespective of their defined groups. Click the **Groups** button again to return to the view seen in the previous steps.

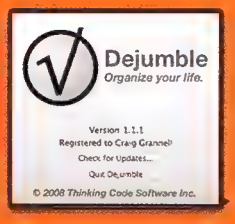
05 It's also possible to filter the tasks within *Dejumble*'s list via other means. The **Search** field works much like Spotlight, honing down the list based on your search string. Also, the bar above the list offers various time-based criteria, such as **Today**, and **Three day outlook** via the **More** menu.

TOOL SCHOOL

[illegible]

EXPERT TIP

Although it's possible to quit *Dejumble* via the *Dejumble* accessed via the Dejumble button at the foot of the task list, the standard ⌘+Q shortcut also works.



Make and upload video blogs

Upload video from your iSight camera directly to YouTube with the free Google Vidnik

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- Mac with an iSight or external webcam
- Mac OS X 10.5 or later (£85, www.apple.com/uk/thestore)
- Google *Vidnik* (free to download from http://code.google.com/p/vidnik/)
- YouTube account (free to set up at www.youtube.com)

Video blogs are becoming more and more popular for those wanting to create online journals or for social networking, but creating and uploading them to the web may be daunting for those new to this way of working. Well, Google has a free tool that makes the whole process pain-free.

Vidnik can be downloaded from **http://code.google.com/p/vidnik/** and used on your Mac to make and upload videos to YouTube. It captures video using your Mac's webcam (be it the built-in iSight or an external version), and adds the results to YouTube's servers. You'll need to set up a YouTube account *before* using *Vidnik*. It's one of the first applications to be borne out of Google's takeover of YouTube, and makes life a lot easier for Mac owners wanting to run video blogs on the popular service.

Reviews Editor James Ellerbeck captures his bad jokes on video.

Vidnik is brand new and loads of people are having fun with it, so we thought we would run through what it can do in an easy, eight-step tutorial. Like *iChat*, it has a hobbiest look, feel and functionality. There is absolutely nothing to configure. It recognises your camera and presents you with its view immediately. You click the **Start** button to start recording, the same button to stop recording, and then you add names and descriptions to the video before you upload it. Basic video editing features are also available, so you can cut out any gaffes you make, but you can't add flashy effects. The info you enter about the video will help people search for it after it has been uploaded to YouTube.

The limitations of the program are obvious, and you can do much more in *iMovie*, but *Vidnik* really won us over with its one-click, seamless integration with YouTube and the simplicity of its interface. We struggle to think of a better tool for making video blogs on a Mac, so follow this tutorial and get started!

James Ellerbeck

TOP FEATURES | A quick tour of Google Vidnik

Webcam view

There is no configuration to step through in order to make your first video. When you open up *Vidnik* the application goes straight to your current webcam view.

Clips menu

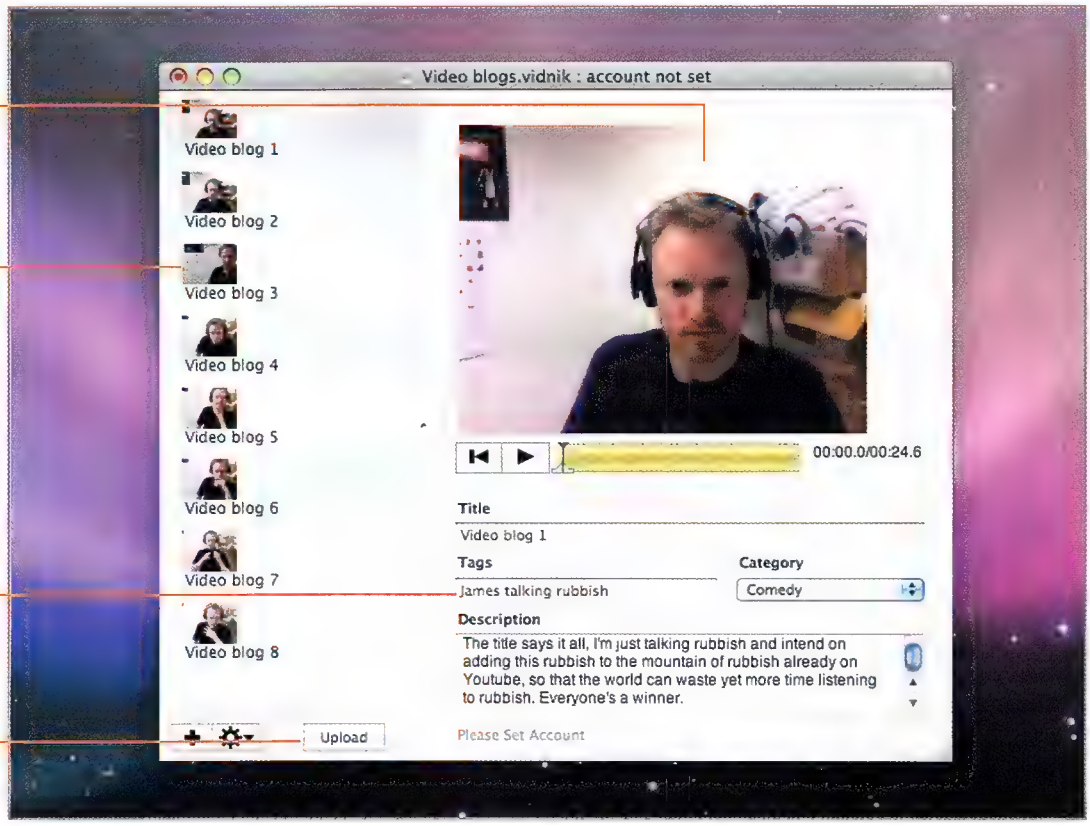
A simple menu system with a thumbnail of each video. This makes it a doddle to see what you have created. Just click on a thumbnail and press **Play** to preview.

Adding tags

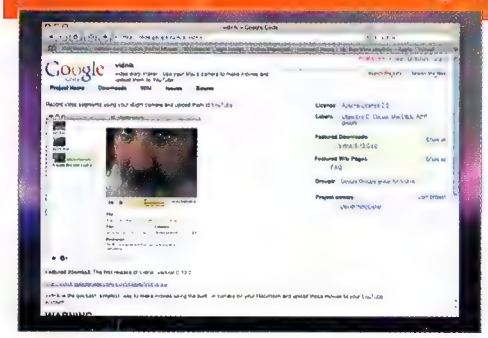
Vidnik gives you the chance to tag and describe the videos it makes before posting them to YouTube. This means the video is instantly searchable by any YouTube users after you upload.

Simple upload

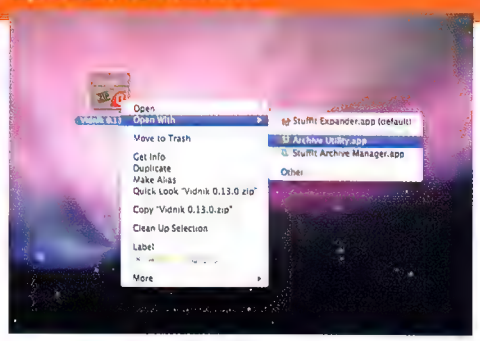
One button does it all. After recording and adding information about your video, just click the **Upload** button and *Vidnik* does the rest. It's easy.



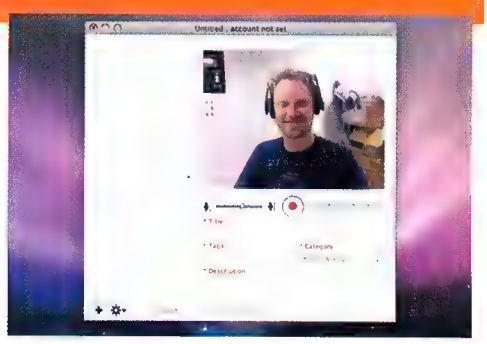
STEP BY STEP Create a video blog and upload it to YouTube



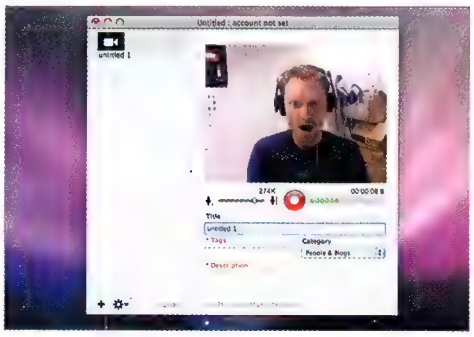
01 First of all, go to **www.youtube.com** and create an account if you don't already have one. Once that's done, download *Vidnik* from **http://code.google.com/p/vidnik/**. It's completely free and not too big a file, so downloading should be a quick process. Save it to your Desktop so you can quickly access it later on.



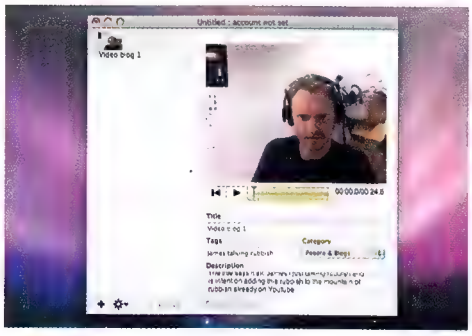
02 Unpack the Zip file by right-clicking on the download. From the list of options, choose Open With > Archive Utility. This OS application will unzip the contents of the folder and present the application to you. Now double-click the application icon to open it.



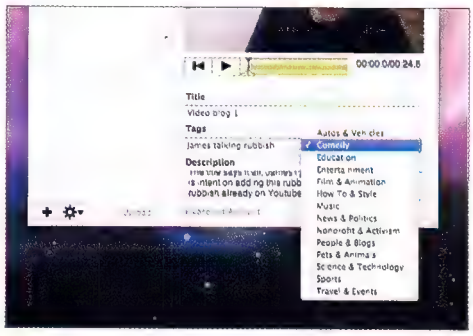
03 With *Vidnik* open, you're presented with your webcam's preview, together with empty fields for entering information about the videos you are making. Now is a good time to test out audio levels, lighting and generally decide what it is you're about to say to the world.



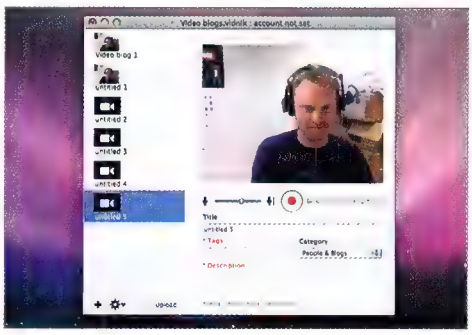
04 You can get started making video right away. Click the **Record** button (the circle with the red dot) to start recording. A little counter next to it tells you the size of the file being made, and a sliding volume control sits next to it; this controls the input volume, so you can play around and get a volume that suits you.



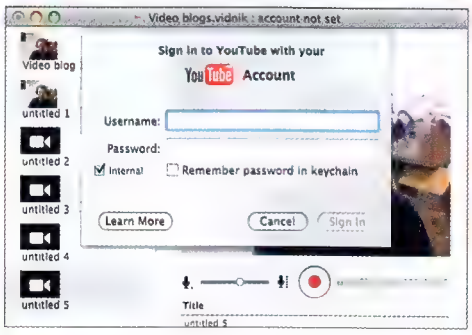
05 When you have finished your recording, click the **Record** button again to stop. Some basic editing functions are available, so you can remove obvious mistakes. Click on the yellow timeline bar to select sections of your recording to eidt then choose **Cut**, **Paste** or **Copy** from the **Edit** menu, as required.



06 Now name the video and add a description for it. The information you enter will display on YouTube in the info box, and help people to find your video. Chose a category that best describes your video. This category helps you both organise your videos into easy-to-manage chunks inside your YouTube account.

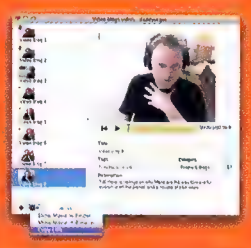


07 To start another video, click the + button in the lower left-hand corner. You'll see the videos start to rack up in the left-hand menu column. You can upload the videos at any time, or preview and delete them. Just click on any of the videos to access them; delete in the usual Mac OS ways or click **Upload** to get the video onto YouTube.



08 The first time you upload a video to YouTube you'll be asked to enter your YouTube ID and password. You need to wait for around five minutes before the videos appear online, depending on their size. Job done – in no time at all!

TOOL SCHOOL



To obtain the URL for any of your videos, just click on the video in the menu list and then click the cog icon next to the plus (+) sign.

EXPERT TIP

If you are a keen YouTuber and would like to download video clips to store locally on your Mac, then look at *Miro* (**www.getmiro.com**), another internet freebie that lets you store YouTube content.

Work smarter with Spaces

Free yourself from a cluttered Desktop using Spaces in Mac OS X 10.5. We show you how it's done

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- A Mac running OS X 10.5+ (£85, www.apple.com/uk/thestore)

We all know that we work best when there are as few distractions as possible and we can just get on with the job. If you're constantly checking your email, messing about looking for songs in *iTunes* or feverishly checking the latest updates on news websites, you're unlikely to achieve as much as you could if you were just dedicating yourself to getting one job done at a time.

This is where Spaces can be a lifesaver, by sectioning off different programs into virtual Desktop areas. Using the methods we show you in this tutorial, you'll be able to be more focused, organised and efficient, which means less stress and getting more done.

Considering how useful Spaces can be, we're quite surprised by how little use people make of this feature of OS X 10.5 Leopard. Maybe Spaces was simply lost amongst the bevy of new features introduced in Leopard, or maybe it's because it's turned off by default. It's a shame, because as you'll see, Spaces is a brilliant, easy-to-use implementation of the virtual Desktop idea that can help you be immediately more productive on your Mac, especially if you're currently struggling under the burden of having to run lots of apps simultaneously. With Spaces you can bring order to your Mac, and therefore your life.

If you tried Spaces once and haven't used it since, then we'd encourage you to revisit it now, because you're missing out on a really useful trick. You will, of course, need a copy of the very latest OS X 10.5 Leopard to use it, as it's simply not available in previous versions of OS X.

Graham Barlow

"Spaces is brilliant, especially if you're struggling under the burden of having to run lots of apps"

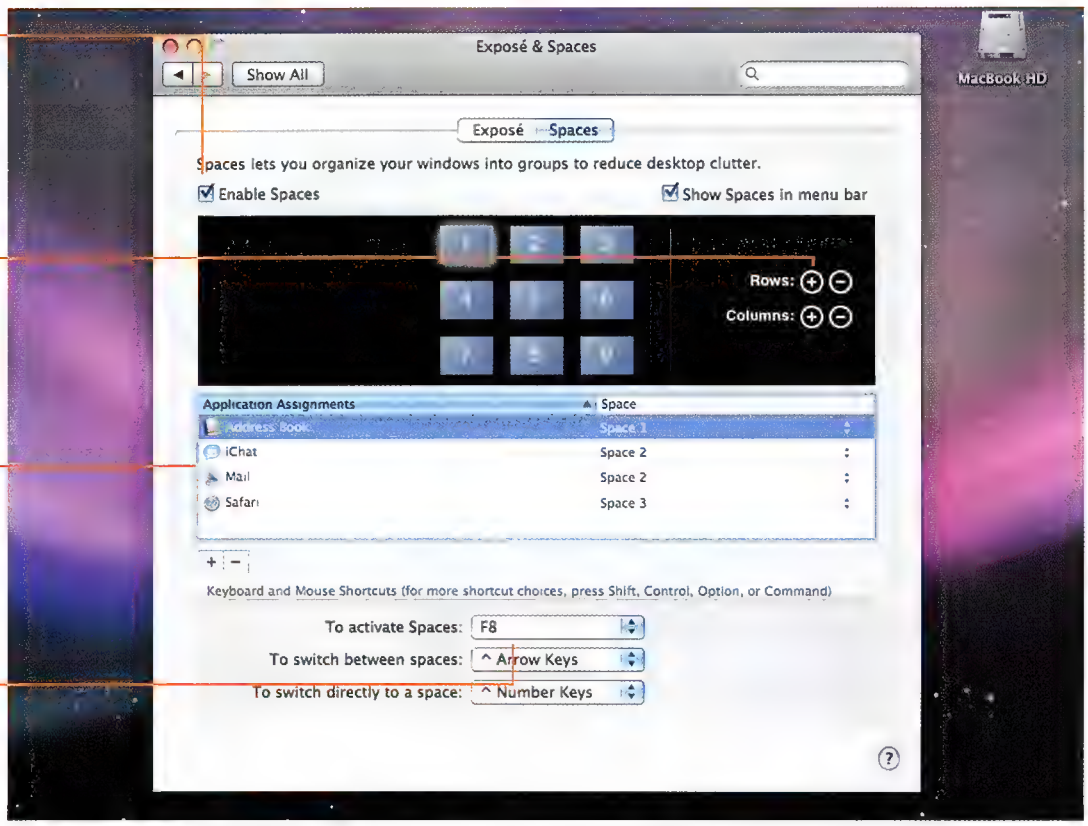
TOP FEATURES | The Spaces settings

Enable Spaces
Spaces is turned off by default in Leopard, so your first step is to enable it in the **Exposé & Spaces** *System Preferences* panel.

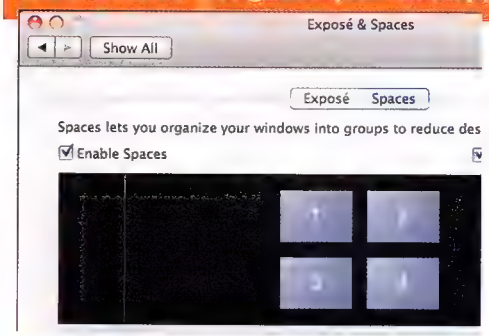
Add more Spaces
You can customise Spaces, choosing the number of rows and columns. Simply click here to add more Desktop Spaces.

Application Assignments
You can set particular programs to run in certain Spaces by default. We've chosen *Address Book*, *iChat*, *Mail* and *Safari*.

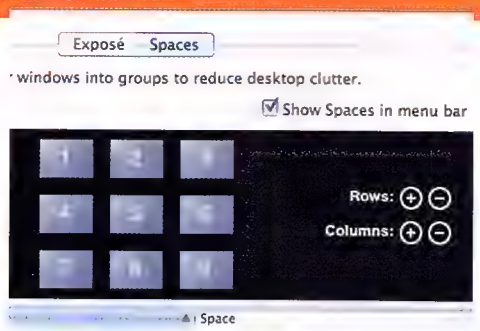
Change activation key
By default, the [F8] key is used to launch Spaces, but you can choose any shortcut you like. Just change this using the drop-down.



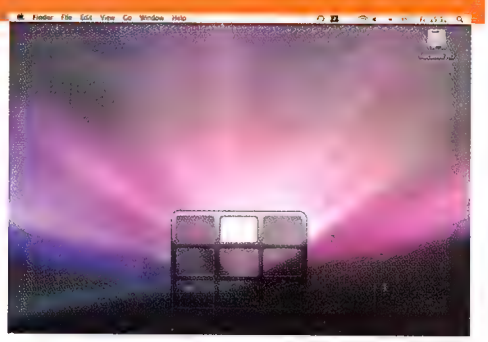
STEP BY STEP Organise your Mac apps using Spaces



01 On a new installation of OS X 10.5 Leopard, Spaces is turned off by default, so the first thing you'll need to do is switch it on. In *System Preferences*, head to **Exposé & Spaces** and in the **Spaces** tab, tick **Enable Spaces**.

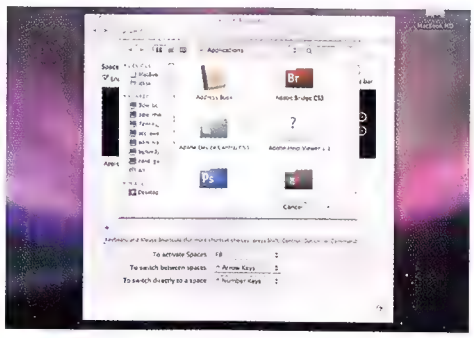


02 By default, you'll see four Spaces in the black oblong window in this Preference screen, although you can have as many as 16 Spaces activated if you like (especially if you own something like the 24-inch iMac reviewed on page 82 this issue!). To add more Spaces, just click the plus (+) symbols next to **Rows** and **Columns**.

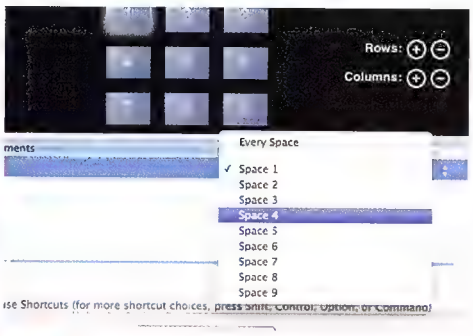


03 Now it's time to experiment with your Spaces. Hold down the [Ctrl] key and press the right arrow key. You'll move into Space 2. The grid showing which Space you are in stays on screen for as long as you hold down the [Ctrl] key. While it's visible, you can move around the grid and change Space by pressing the other arrow keys.

04 You can't have different Desktop backgrounds in each Space, but you'll notice that programs disappear when you change Space. Try this now: open a program, such as *Safari*, in Space 2, then switch to another Space. *Safari* disappears. If you ⌥+[Tab] back to *Safari* you'll change back to Space 2, where you opened it.

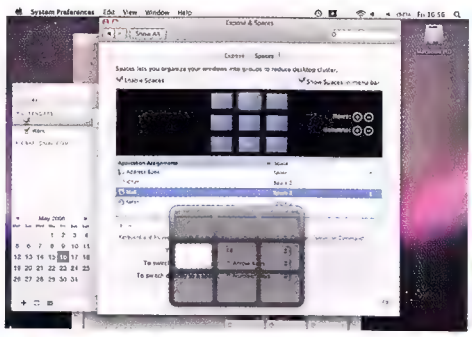


05 The easiest way to organise your workflow is to assign particular applications to particular Spaces; this way, they'll always open in their allotted Space by default. Back in the **Spaces** Preference panel, click the plus (+) symbol under **Application Assignments** and choose an application from the file browser.



06 You'll notice that the application appears in Space 1 by default. You can simply choose a different Space using the drop-down menu shown here. Continue assigning applications to different Spaces. You might like to work with all your communication apps (*Mail* and *iChat*) in one Space and web browsing (*Safari*) in another.

07 Once they are running, you can move applications between Spaces easily. Open a few programs, then click the **Spaces** icon in the Dock. You'll see the Spaces grid, as shown above, and you can now easily drag and drop running apps into different Spaces.



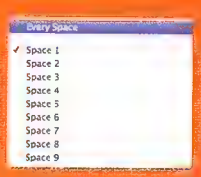
08 You can also move an app into a new Space by dragging it to the extremity of the screen and holding down the [Ctrl] key. Keep dragging in the direction you want the app to go and it will pop into the adjacent Space.

TOOL SCHOOL

Make sure 'Show spaces in menu bar' is checked in System Preferences' Exposé & Spaces options screen. Now you can see which Space you're in at a glance by looking at the menu bar.

EXPERT TIP

When you're selecting which Space an app will open in, you can choose Every Space from the list. This will make the app available regardless of which Space you're in.



Words **Cliff Joseph** Photography **Amanda Thomas**

Get more from iWork '08

In part one of our guide to office software, we show you the highlights of Apple iWork '08: Pages, Numbers and Keynote

Playing with the *iLife* software that comes bundled with every Mac can be so much fun that we often forget that most people use their computer for the more mundane task of simply earning a living. Whether you're a high-flying executive in a multinational corporation, a one-man band working from home, or a student preparing some coursework, we all need a good set of office software for writing letters, balancing the budget or preparing presentations.

Microsoft *Office* remains the first choice for most business users – if only to make certain that you can share your documents with the millions of people who are using the PC versions of *Word*, *Excel* and *PowerPoint*. But let's not damn Microsoft with faint praise – Microsoft *Office 2008* is an extremely powerful software suite, and with the Home And Student Edition now available for just £100, it's a good buy for home and educational users, too.

But then, so is Apple's home-grown *iWork* suite. Priced at just £55, *iWork* doesn't have the sheer depth and power of Microsoft *Office*, but it's more than powerful enough for most home and educational users who need a good, affordable set of office software. It's also extremely easy to use – especially *Numbers*, which deserves an award for being the most stylish spreadsheet app we've ever seen.

> "iWork is extremely easy to use – especially Numbers, the most stylish spreadsheet app we've ever seen"

Mind you, it's now possible to get a complete suite of office software without spending any money at all. The open source movement has thrown up two free office suites for the Mac in the form of *NeoOffice* (**www.neooffice.org**) and *OpenOffice.org* (**www.openoffice.org**), the latter of which is reviewed on page 90 this issue. And, in its ongoing bid for total world domination, Google is offering *Google Docs* (**http://docs.google.com**), a free online office suite that operates through your web browser.

However, these free alternatives are very much work in progress, and most Mac users will still end up choosing between *iWork* and *Office 2008*. So, we've put together a superb guide to the main features of these two powerhouse software suites. Starting this issue, we cover the whole *iWork* suite, which contains *Pages*, the word processing app; *Numbers*, the spreadsheet program; and *Keynote*, the world-class presentation tool. Next issue we'll be bringing you our guide to the Microsoft *Office* Suite, so look out for it when it hits the shelves on 23 June. Meanwhile, let's delve into *iWork*! ►

Whatever software you need for your home office setup, Apple's *iWork* suite – with its word processor, spreadsheet app and presentation software – delivers.

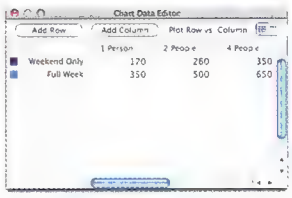
Pages

Pages is more than just a word processor – it includes DTP and page-layout features, too

Those of you who think of *Pages* as just an ordinary word processor are going to be in for a surprise here. It also includes a wide range of versatile design tools that allow you to create attractive page layouts for many different types of documents, from school reports to business cards. And, of course, in usual Apple style it's incredibly easy to use, thanks to a selection of templates that lets you create sophisticated layouts in seconds.

TABLES AND CHARTS

Pages includes simple tools for creating tables and charts. The **Tables** tool creates a kind of miniature spreadsheet that you can fill with information, such as price lists, and then add to your page layout just like a text box. The **Chart** tool allows you to insert data and converts it into a variety of graph or chart formats.



PROOFREADING TOOLS

As well as a conventional spelling checker, *Pages* also includes a **Proofreader** option (in the **Edit** menu) that can check your text and suggest changes that improve the writing style or clarify the meaning. You can even select words and then tell *Pages* to look them up on Google or Wikipedia to provide additional information.

PAGE TEMPLATES

You can add more pages to your documents simply by clicking on the **Pages** button in the main toolbar. In order to provide plenty of variety, each template includes a series of designs for different pages, such as a cover and back page for a newsletter, or inside pages that just contain solid text.

PARAGRAPH STYLES

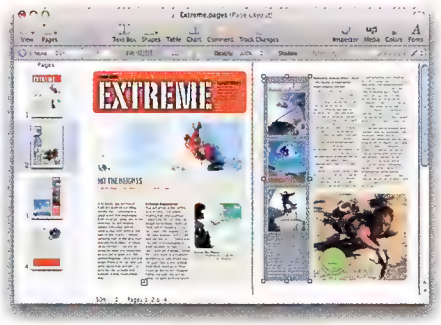
The **Paragraph Styles** slide-out drawer is one of *Pages'* most powerful tools. It enables you to create and save 'styles' – such as Helvetica 10 point bold – that you can instantly apply to entire paragraphs of text, ensuring that all the text within your document follows a consistent style. You can create multiple styles, such as the main text, headlines and captions.

FROM LETTERS TO POSTERS

Pages includes almost 150 templates that you can use to create your documents. The templates range from simple letters to cards and posters, complex multi-page newsletters and reports that combine text and graphics. You can modify and save the templates by dragging and dropping your own text and graphics onto a page.

VIEWING MODES

As well as using the ordinary **Zoom** tool to zoom in or out on a particular page, you can also switch between two viewing modes, called **One Up** and **Two Up**. The **One Up** mode displays one page at a time; **Two Up** displays two pages side by side. This gives you a better idea of how two-page spreads will look.

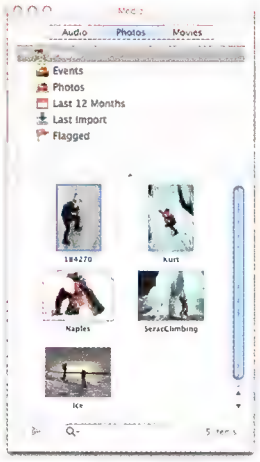


CUSTOMISABLE TOOLBAR

Tucked away in the **View** menu is a **Customise Toolbar** command. This allows you to customise the main toolbar so that you have instant access to all the tools you use the most. If you're creating a newsletter that contains lots of photos, you can put the **Adjust Image** command onto the toolbar, or the **List** tool for creating bullet lists for a report.

INSPECTOR PALETTE

With the **Inspector** palette you can adjust the settings for any text or graphic. It's divided into tabbed pages with tools for adjusting text formatting, the way text wraps around graphics, graphs, charts, and even *QuickTime* video files that you can insert into pages.

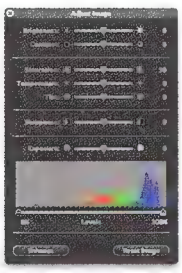


MEDIA PALETTE

The **Media** palette enables you to view all the photos you have stored in *iPhoto*, so that you can quickly drag and drop them straight into your *Pages* documents. This palette also allows you to insert music from your *iTunes* Library or video files stored in your **Movies** folder. Remember that you can use your *Pages* documents on websites – as well as just printing them out – so these options enable you to add music and video content to your website, too.

PHOTO EDITING

Pages borrows a number of photo-editing tools from *iPhoto*. You can adjust settings such as the brightness and contrast of an image, the colour balance and saturation, and even adjust the exposure. There's also a **Mask** option that allows you to cover parts of a photo so that it only shows the parts you want.



KEYBOARD SHORTCUTS

Edit Menu

⌘+⇧+⌥+[V] – Pastes text onto the page and automatically applies the current text style
⌘+[E] – Finds text that matches the current selection
⌘+⇧+[;] – Checks the spelling

Format Menu

⌘+[T] – Shows the Font palette
⌘+[+]/[-] – Increases/decreases text size
⌘+⌥+[\] – Justify text
⌘+⇧+[\] – Centre text
⌘+⇧+[D] – Open the Data Editor (for tables or charts)
⌘+⌥+[C] – Copy paragraph style
⌘+⌥+[V] – Paste paragraph style

View Menu

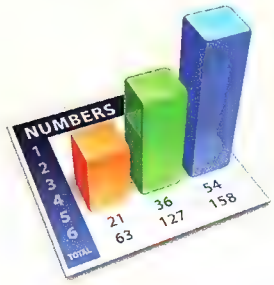
⌘+⇧+[T] – Show/hide Styles drawer
⌘+⇧+[L] – Show/hide Layout elements
⌘+[>] – Zoom in
⌘+[<] – Zoom out
⌘+⌥+[F] – Show Spotlight search bar
⌘+⌥[I] – Show Inspector palette

Misc

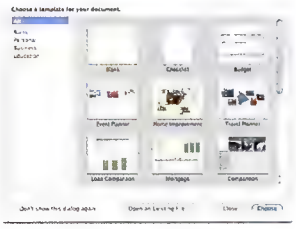
Arrow keys – Move selected text or graphics one point in direction of arrow (in Page layout mode only)
⇧+Arrow keys – Move selected text or graphics 10 points in direction of arrow (in Page layout mode only)
⌘+⇧+[V] – Insert text/graphics file from hard disk
⌘+[?] – Open *Pages'* Help system

Numbers

We wouldn't have thought it possible, but Numbers makes spreadsheets fun!



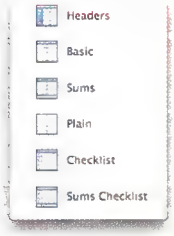
Numbers can't match the sheer number-crunching and analytical power of Microsoft *Excel*, so *Excel* is still the best choice for business users who need a really powerful spreadsheet for their work. However, where Apple's *Numbers* scores is in its wonderful ease of use, making it ideal for us simple folk who find *Excel* rather intimidating and a bit serious for our spreadsheet needs.



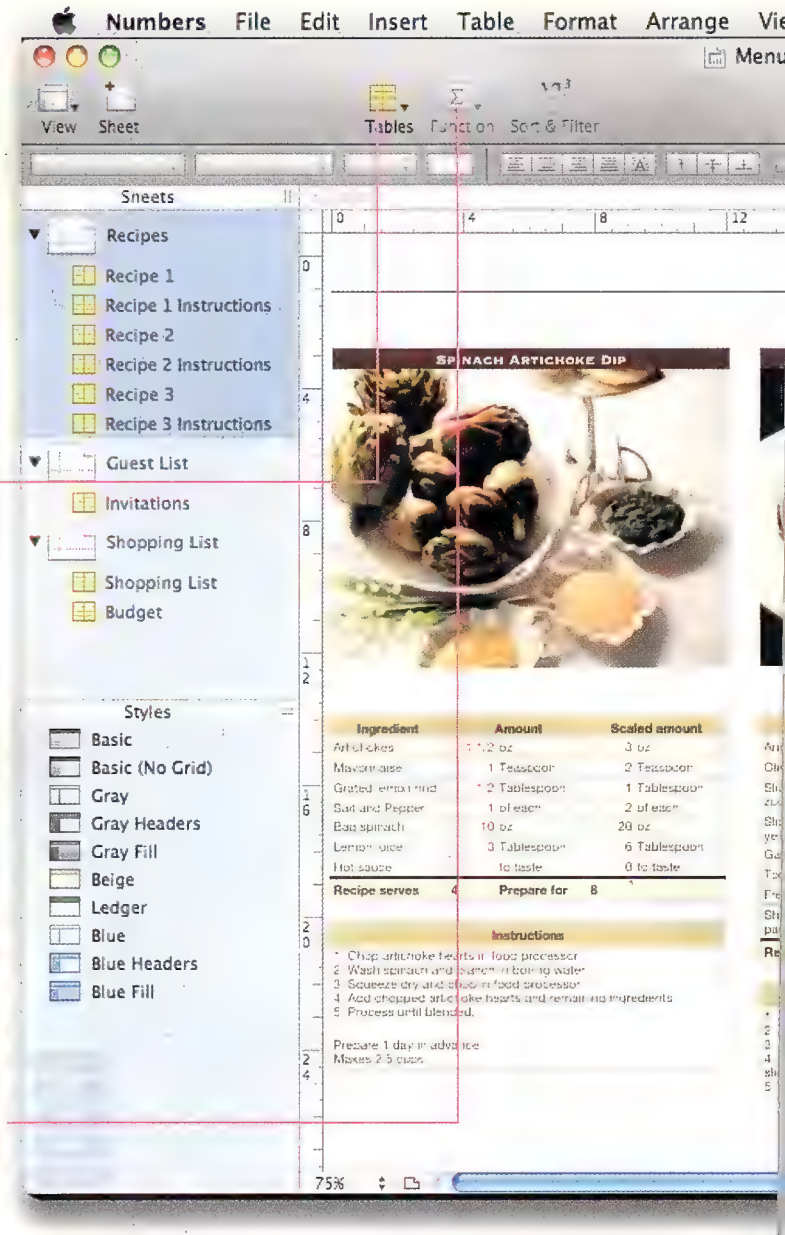
ILLUSTRATED TEMPLATES

The templates in *Numbers* aren't just for boring things like price lists and expense accounts. They include illustrated designs for projects such as planning a dinner party or decorating a flat. These templates make it easy to combine numerical data with eye-catching graphics or photos.

INSERTING TABLES

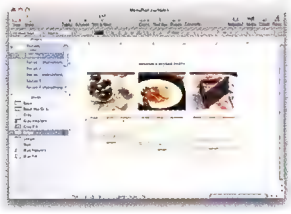


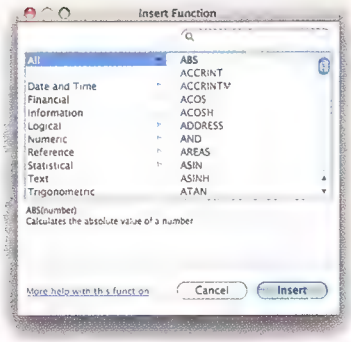
As well as the main templates used to create documents, *Numbers* also includes a set of mini-templates that can be used to insert tables into documents. There are predefined tables for doing simple sums, or adding checklists of parts. This is a perfect example of the program's intuitive workflow.



PRINT VIEW

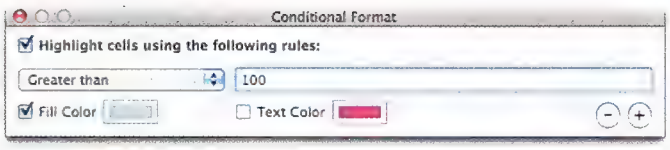
Numbers has a special **Print View** that enables you to see how your document will look when you print it out. You can examine each of the sheets within the document, and also continue to edit the document in **Print View**, so that you can immediately see how any changes will appear on the printed page.





CALCULATION FUNCTIONS

Like any good spreadsheet, *Numbers* includes a wide range of functions for performing calculations. The functions are divided into categories such as 'date and time', and financial or scientific calculations. It also includes a **Formula Editor** for performing complex calculations that aren't included in the standard functions.



CONDITIONAL FORMAT

You can use the **Conditional Format** command to highlight parts of your document that meet certain conditions. You do this by setting Rules that examine any text or numerical values to see if they meet your conditions. We've set a rule here to warn us if the cost of our menu goes too high.

TURN DATA INTO CHARTS

You can quickly convert your spreadsheet data into graphs and charts in order to add visual impact to your documents. Just select the data and click on the **Charts** icon to see the types of chart that are available. There are bar graphs, pie charts, and a number of charts that use 3D perspective effects for impact.

INSPECTOR PALETTE

Like *Pages*, *Numbers* includes an **Inspector** palette that allows you to quickly view and adjust the settings for a variety of different elements within your document. There aren't many spreadsheets that include options for setting the transparency, reflection and even shadow effects.

ADJUST IMAGE

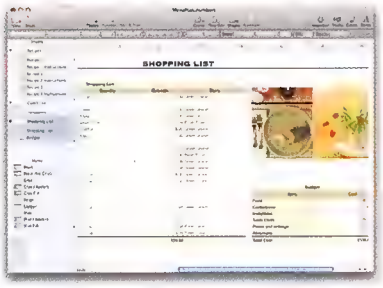
Like *Pages* and *Keynote*, *Numbers* borrows a number of image-editing tools from *iPhoto*. The now-familiar **Adjust Image** palette includes controls for adjusting the brightness and contrast of images, along with settings for changing the exposure and colour balance.

MEDIA BROWSER

Another feature that's common across all the *iWork* apps is the **Media Browser**. This allows you to select music, photos or video files on your hard disk and insert them into your *Numbers* document. For instance, we've used a video clip of good old Delia Smith cooking tips to help us prepare our menu.

INFORMATION SHEETS

Any *Numbers* document can include a series of 'sheets'. A sheet is simply an additional page that can include extra information relating to a project. This makes it easy to break a project down into smaller, manageable elements. This one has a shopping and price list for our dinner menu.



KEYBOARD SHORTCUTS

Edit Menu

⌘+⇧+⌥+[V] – Pastes text onto the page and automatically applies the current text style
⌘+[E] – Finds text that matches the current selection
⌘+⇧+[;] – Checks the spelling

Format Menu

⌘+[+]/[-] – Increases/decreases text size
⌘+⌥+[\] – Justify text
⌘+⇧+[\] – Centre text
⌘+⇧+[M] – Cover part of an image with a mask

Arrange Menu

⌘+⌥+[G] – Group objects together
⌘+⇧+⌥+[G] – Ungroup object
⌘+[L] – Lock object (so that it can no longer be edited)
⌘+⌥+[L] – Unlock object

View Menu

⌘+⌥+[P] – Switch to Print View
⌘+[R] – Show ruler guides
⌘+[>] – Zoom in
⌘+[<] – Zoom out
⌘+⌥+[I] – Show Inspector palette

Misc

⌘+Page Up/Page Down – Switch to next/previous sheet
⌘+[Ctrl]+[+] – Makes the text or number superscript
⌘+[D] – Duplicate object
[Ctrl]-click – Open shortcut menu for any item
⌘-click – On any cell to select entire table
[Tab] – Select next cell in table
⇧+[Tab] – Select previous cell in table

Keynote

Keynote's strength lies in its powerful animation and special effects tools

Finally, we turn our attention to the big brother of the suite. *Keynote* is the oldest of the current set of *iWork* programs, and this application has certainly advanced a great deal since it was first launched. The latest *Keynote '08* focuses on providing an array of powerful – yet easy to use – animation controls, transitions and special effects that make it a serious rival for the veteran *PowerPoint*. If you haven't tried this fantastic app yet, we'd advise you to do so now – you're unlikely to look back.

SPEEDY CHART CREATION

If you need to add graphics or charts to a presentation, you can do this by clicking on the **Chart** button. This activates a small spreadsheet window where you can enter data, which is then converted into a chart. As well as ordinary 2D graphs and charts, *Keynote* allows you to extrude graphics such as pie charts into 3D, to rotate them, and even to apply lighting effects that shine in from different angles.

BUILD ANIMATION EFFECTS

One of *Keynote*'s best features is the ability to create 'builds' – cool animation effects that make objects appear on screen, or animate them so that they move around the screen. There are 'in' and 'out' builds that determine how an object appears or disappears from a slide, and 'actions' that allow you to freely control the movement of objects on screen.

PICK A THEME

Each template has its own theme, but if you don't like the look of your presentation you can quickly switch to another theme by opening up the **Theme Chooser**. You can apply the new theme to a single slide or to the entire presentation all in one go. The typeface, backgrounds and colour schemes used in your original presentation will all change automatically to use the new theme.

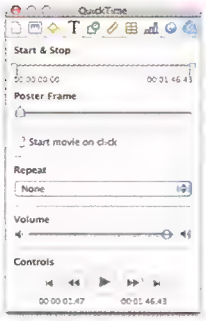
MASTER SLIDES

As well as having a theme, each *Keynote* template also includes a series of 'master slides'. These provide variations on the basic theme so that you can create slides with different types of information on them. Some master slides may be designed for bullet-point lists, while others are designed for presenting photographs or your video clips.

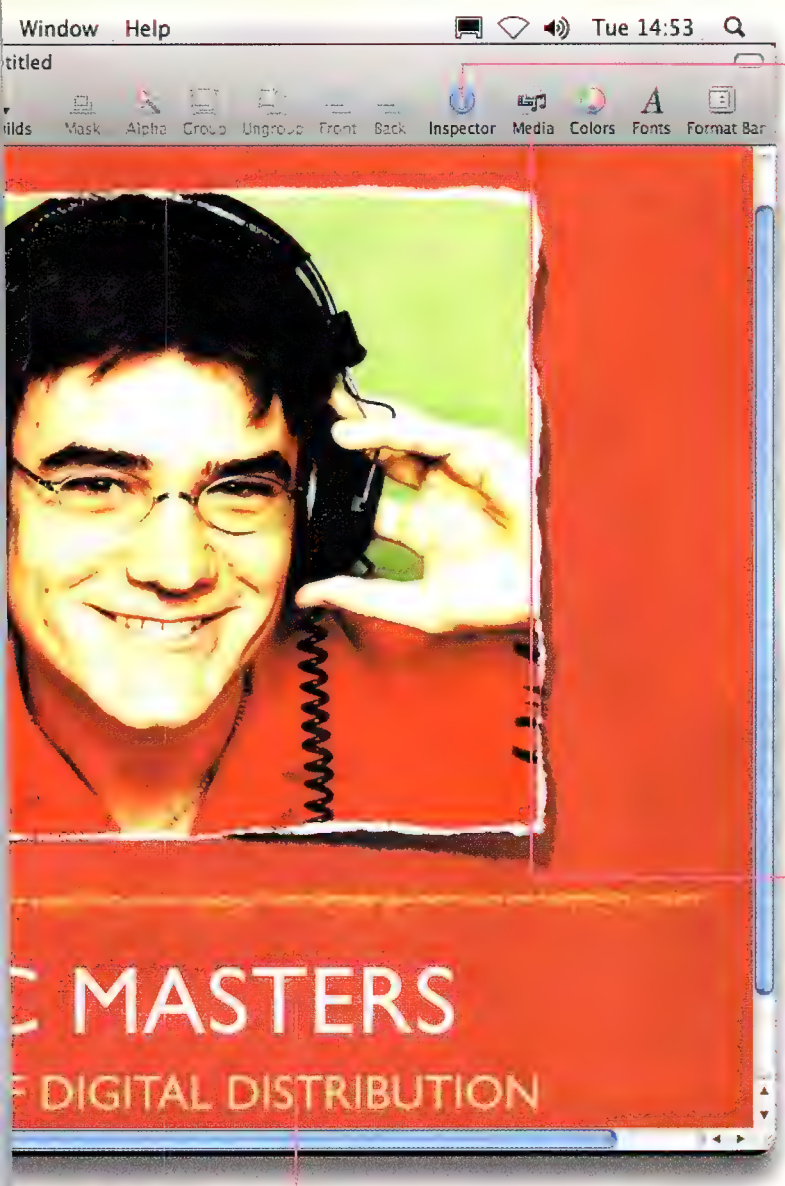
BULLET-LIST STYLES

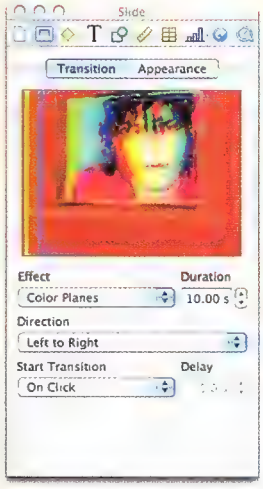
No presentation is complete without a bullet-point list that separates information out into easy-to-read sections, and *Keynote* provides a number of handy options for creating and formatting bullet lists. As well as formatting the text, there are options for indenting items and a small library of clip art images that you can use to replace the standard bullet-point symbol. You can even import your own images and artwork to add a really individual touch.

ADD QUICKTIME CLIPS



If a picture paints a thousand words, a video clip should be even better. You can easily drag and drop video clips into your slides, then use the **QuickTime** controls in *Keynote* to set the start and end points for the clip (so you don't need to edit it first), and also to set a 'poster frame' – a single frame that acts as a preview image for the clip.





INSPECTOR PALETTE

The **Inspector** palette appears in all the *iWork* programs, but it's even more important in *Keynote* than it is in *Pages* and *Numbers*. The **Inspector** in *Keynote* controls visual effects such as transitions and animations. Inserting transitions between slides is extremely easy; you just select a transition from the **Effects** menu, specify the direction of the effect and how long it should last, and *Keynote* does the rest.

SMARTBUILD PALETTE

The **SmartBuild** palette uses the 'drop zone' approach that Apple developed for *iMovie* and *iDVD*. You can drop a series of photos into this palette and *Keynote* will automatically add them to a slide and create a slideshow effect by inserting transitions.

ADDING AUDIO

You can also use audio in presentations. Add one file that plays as a soundtrack, or add audio files to individual slides. You can record voice-over tracks, too.

TEMPLATES AND THEMES

Like *Pages* and *Numbers*, *Keynote* includes a variety of templates to help you produce good results very quickly. Each template has its own 'theme', which includes details such as background graphics and typefaces that are chosen to complement each other. You can quickly change themes by using the **Themes** pull-down menu.

KEYBOARD SHORTCUTS

Edit Menu

⌘+⇧+⌥+[V] – Pastes text onto the page and automatically applies the current text style
⌘+[E] – Finds text that matches the current selection
⌘+⇧+[;]– Checks the spelling

Format Menu

⌘+[+]/[-] – Increases/decreases text size
⌘+⌥+[\] – Justify text
⌘+⇧+[\] – Centre text
⌘+⇧+[M] – Cover with a mask
⌘+⇧+[D] – Open Data Editor

Arrange Menu

⌘+⌥+[G] – Group objects together
⌘+⇧+⌥+[G] – Ungroup object
⌘+[L] – Lock object (so that it can no longer be edited)
⌘+⌥+[L] – Unlock object

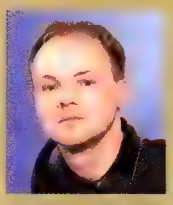
View Menu

⌘+⌥+[P] – Play slideshow
⌘+[R] – Show ruler guides
⌘+[>] – Zoom in
⌘+[<] – Zoom out
⌘+⌥+[I] – Show Inspector palette

Misc

[Tab] – Select the next object on the slide canvas
⇧+[Tab] – Select the previous object on the slide canvas
Arrow keys – Move object one pixel
⇧+Arrow keys – Move object 10 pixels
⌘+[D] – Duplicate selected object
⌘+[,] – Opens up Preferences/ Presenter settings

Q&A

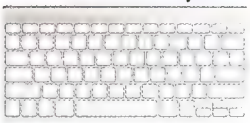


Got a problem with your Mac? Send your queries to Luis at mfhelpline@futurenet.co.uk

Luis solves your RAID conundrums, your corrupting file queries, your password protection problems and more

QUICK TIP

Delete on a wireless keyboard



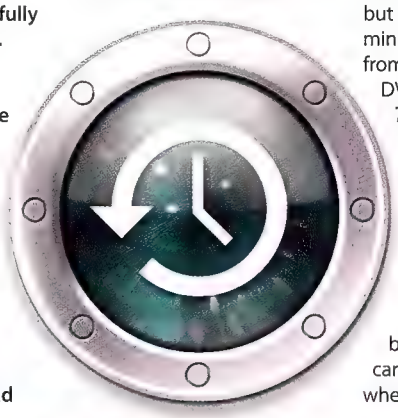
If you have the new wireless keyboard from Apple, you can access the function of the absent delete key by hitting [Fn]+[Backspace].
(Thanks to reader Jonathan Fletcher)

THE BACKUP TIME MACHINE FORGOT

Q **I'm using a G4 iMac that's been upgraded to Leopard 10.5.2 and I recently purchased an Iomega UltraMax HDD to back up films, pictures and so on. I chose this device based on the claim that it's specifically formatted for Macs and compatible with Leopard, and the reviews indicated that it had been successfully used with *Time Machine*.**

My first attempt at backing up with *Time Machine*, which of course was to back up the entire contents of the Macintosh HD, worked without any glitches. However, subsequent attempts, whether automated or prompted by me, have resulted in a situation whereby the backup procedure is initiated and signposted by an interrupted moving blue and white diagonal line under which the word "preparing" can be seen, but which never leads to the actual backup phase.
Omar Shaheen

A *Time Machine* keeps an eye on everything you do that modifies the hard disk, so that it knows which files have changed and therefore what needs backing up. These changes get written to a log file and, normally, *Time Machine* is happy to let itself be guided entirely by the log. There are some things, though, that can make *Time Machine* lose faith in its own log, and when this happens it will rescan the entire hard disk to compare it with the last backup. This is quicker than backing up the whole disk, but it can still take about 20 minutes to finish. Booting from the Leopard installation DVD will do this because *Time Machine* panics that you might have changed some system files, and there's no easy way for it to check.



Even worse, though, are the situations where *Time Machine* will never finish preparing the backup. Anti-virus software can often do this, especially where it scans in the background, as the low-level disk access involved will look like it's constantly modifying files. This is an example of a situation where anti-virus software does more harm than good. You're somewhere in the region of a bajillion times more likely to lose data through not backing up than from a virus on your Mac. Scientific fact.

Just occasionally the backup disk itself is to blame. If the filing system gets corrupted, *Time Machine* can get stuck on the preparing phase. Cycling the power or unplugging and replugging the disk can be enough to fix this but you may need to repartition the drive in *Disk Utility* in more serious cases.

EJECTING DISCS PROBLEM REVISITED

Q **I was intrigued by your answer to the query from Peter Scott (in issue 195,**

Q&A EXTRA | Essential Mac advice from MacWarehouse

WIRELESS WISE

A colleague asked me about setting up a wireless network the other day. He knew that he could set up his wireless base station so that only the computers that he specified can access it – something called MAC address filtering, of which more later – and wanted to know whether this was enough to stop his neighbours using his network.

There are two answers to this. The short one is that in general this will stop unauthorised use of your wireless network. The long answer is that although it will generally stop uninvited guests, what it won't do is make your wireless secure, so if you're doing something that uses an insecure protocol such as email, then a third party can capture that traffic and potentially read your email. The real answer is that while MAC address filtering is a first step you also need to use some form of wireless encryption.

The wireless card in your Mac has a unique number assigned to it, known as its Media Access Control address or MAC address. In fact, all network interfaces have a unique MAC address, whether they're Ethernet, wireless or Bluetooth, and these addresses form part of the systems for devices to communicate. Even though every card is unique it's possible to configure a wireless interface to ignore its address and to use a different one. There can be perfectly valid reasons for doing this, but it does mean you can circumvent base stations that only allow wireless cards with specified MAC addresses to connect.

The next layer on top of MAC address filtering is to use encryption of some form. There have been a variety of different encryption schemes that have been used but the current favourite is probably WPA2, which was developed to address a number of the shortcomings in the earlier WEP system, which is relatively easy to crack. That said, if your base

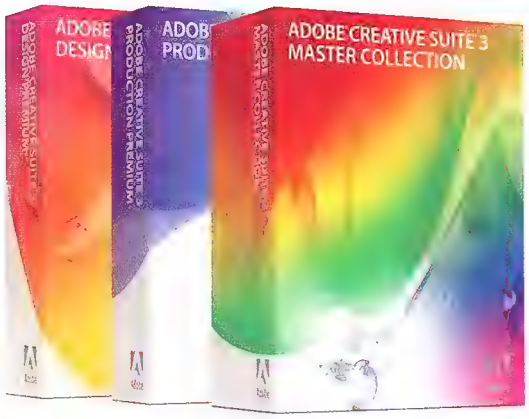
page 78) about his problem ejecting discs. Haven't we all had this problem on occasion – due to not having 'ejected' a virtual disc that has mounted on the Desktop as part of the process for installing a piece of software? Until all such discs are unmounted, the DVD will not eject. Surely a better place to start with this problem than your more complicated starting place?
John Robinson

A Um, yes. Good point. Did I not mention that one? Perhaps I assumed it. Let's all just pretend that I assumed it.

IMPORTING US SOFTWARE TO THE UK

Q I'm wanting to upgrade from Adobe *CS2 Premium* to Adobe *CS3 Premium*. I've found a US site called Cheap Softwares, offering a new, full version at approximately half the price of an upgrade in this country. They tell me that it would work okay in the UK. Can you tell me if it would actually work here problem-free and if so, will I be able to register it with Adobe?
Pete Thompson

A Are you sure they weren't spelling it 'softwarez'? I haven't been able to find the site you refer to, so the first thing to do is make sure you're not buying pirated software. Often this is described as OEM software and what they do is resell the software CDs that come bundled with new hardware by the manufacturer.



Whatever country you're in you shouldn't have a problem using software bought in the US.

Sometimes it isn't even that subtle, it's just CD-R copies of original discs. Both of these are different ways to commit copyright theft. Nevertheless, the combination of a strong pound and the tendency of software publishers to convert dollar prices directly into sterling can often present a tempting bargain. The catch is that although there's no import duty on software discs, you'll be liable for VAT at 17.5%, plus a handling fee from the Post Office.

From an installation/registration point of view, there's no problem. Sometimes cryptography export laws or DRM may restrict where a program can be used, but other than that you can buy your software from wherever you like.

QUICK AND DIRTY NETWORK SECURITY

Q I have a MacBook Pro trying to access the internet via a Linksys router. My iMac is connected using Ethernet. I don't use WEP security because this made connecting to the internet impossible. Instead, the Apple helpline suggested that I use access restriction so my network can only see my iMac. I need to access the control list and add the MAC address of my iMac. The setup using 192.168.1.1 suggests this is possible but the Linksys website offers no clues, so I would be grateful for any help you can offer.
David Martin

A 192.168.1.1 is the default IP address for Linksys routers. If you type this into the address bar of *Safari*, you'll be presented with the configuration web page for the router. Click the **Wireless** tab and enable **Wireless MAC Filter**. Now select **Permit only** and click the **Edit MAC Filter List** button. Now enter the Media Access Control or MAC address of your MacBook. This address is hard-coded into every network device and is unique to your laptop (to discover more about your MAC address see Q&A Extra, below). You'll find it by selecting **About This Mac** from the **Apple** menu and then clicking the **More Info...** button. Select **Network** from the list on the left and scroll the right-hand pane all the way to the bottom where you should see the MAC address presented as six, two-digit, hexadecimal numbers.

Access Control lists provide a way to limit who can connect to your router, but they don't have any effect on the individual network packets on their way to or from the router. If you're using a wireless connection, a hacker could theoretically intercept your network traffic with any other wireless device that was in range. Access Control will thus not protect your privacy ►

QUICK TIP

Improve iChat sound

If you're using audio chat in *iChat* and the sound quality falls off, try selecting the **Mute** button for a second and then clicking it off again. This forces *iChat* to recalibrate the audio connection.

QUICK TIP

Stop iChat sleeping

If you use your own digital camcorder with *iChat*, you can prevent it from automatically going to sleep by removing the tape from the camera.

Use your MAC address to stop your neighbours connecting to your router.

station only provides WEP security then it is better than using none at all.

In order to set up WPA2 encryption you'll need to configure a password for your network on the base station. Apple allows you to enter a plain English password (but you should still make sure it's not easily guessable), though other manufacturers aren't quite so friendly. I recently set up a Siemens base station provided by Orange that turned my password into a long string of hexadecimal characters and it was this that I then had to enter on the Mac that I wanted to connect to the network.

The tougher the encryption that you use to protect your wireless network the more work the Mac and the base station have to do to decrypt every packet of data that's sent, and so the slower your network will be. When 802.11b networking was cutting edge this could have quite an impact on wireless performance, but if you're using 802.11n it should be barely noticeable.

The final trick is to avoid broadcasting your base station's name. If you look in your AirPort menu you'll probably see your neighbour's networks, but if you have **Broadcast** turned off (in your router's settings) you won't be able to see your network.

In order to connect to it now you'll have to select **Other...** and type in the name of the network you want. Now if somebody wants to connect to your network without your permission they'll have to guess its name, guess the password and pretend to be a Mac that you have authorised to connect!

Bill Gallop is Technical Manager of MacWarehouse
www.macwarehouse.co.uk

QUICK TIP

Quicker Dock size adjustment

You can resize the Dock without needing to access *System Preferences* simply by dragging the little vertical line that divides your applications from your folders and the Trash.

from a serious hacker but, unless you're wanted by Special Branch or something, this is not typically a serious threat. What Access Control will do is prevent your neighbours from pinching your bandwidth by connecting to your router, rather than their own. The disadvantage is that you need to add a new MAC address to the permitted list every time a friend or visitor brings their laptop round.

MYSTERIOUSLY CORRUPTING FILES

Q My machine is a 15-inch MacBook Pro. The problem I have is random freezes/crashes while using applications and most recently, *Safari* and *Mail* refuse to quit unless I force quit. Usually what happens after a crash is that I have to manually power-down using the power button, and then on restart I find all kinds of strangeness, for example, the Dock reverting to its default size with default icons. Several times I've rebooted to find that my *iTunes* has been 'damaged', and I've had to re-import everything, which takes hours. Or *Mail* has 'lost' my mail and I've had to re-enter all my ISP settings. Or *iPhoto* has 'lost' my entire photo library – it's all there on the hard drive, but when I've tried to re-import the photos *iPhoto* tells me the files have not been recognised. They open fine in *Preview*, but *iPhoto* doesn't want to know.

Backing up onto external FireWire drives has averted disaster on several occasions, but this sort of behaviour can't be right. I'm meticulous at using *OnyX*, *ClamXav* and *MacScan* for maintenance and to check for any weird stuff, but it seems to me that something in my system is causing corrupted preference files for all of the applications I've mentioned. Please could you help?

I'm not particularly techie – mainly I use my Mac for making music with *Logic Pro* (which works great). I can't believe I paid over a grand for this laptop that isn't remotely as stable as the G3 running OS 9 that I had for eight years without any of this nonsense. I hate to go against the grain here, but my next computer's going to be one running Windows at this rate.

Leigh Griffiths

Mail refusing to quit could be the first sign of approaching drive failure.

For cross-platform sharing, format your ExpressCard so that both Windows and OS X will recognise it.

A I wonder if maybe all these low-level utilities aren't part of the problem? I've already hinted to Omar Shaheen in answer to the first question that running a virus scanner on a Mac is pointless. It's like spraying shark repellent in your living room. Even the *ClamXav* website admits that there are no viruses for OS X in the wild. I simply don't buy into the argument that Mac users should virus-scan their computers to prevent them from inadvertently passing something onto a Windows user. The only way this would happen is if you manually forwarded an email that contained a virus. So just don't forward random emails – it really is that simple.

Anyway, it's clear that your filing system is suffering pernicious corruptions. This is either the fault of low-level software or an early sign of approaching drive failure. If you have file corruptions in document files as well as applications, I'd favour the latter. Otherwise, try laying off all those scanners for a while and see if that helps.

CROSS-PLATFORM DISKS FOR SHARING

Q For some time I've used a Lexar 16GB ExpressCard SSD on my PC running Windows Vista to transfer files between PCs. Now I have a MacBook Pro with OS X. I noticed this has an ExpressCard slot and so I tried to transfer a file from my PC. Due to my inexperience with Macs I managed to clear the card of all its data and it's now only recognised as a *Time Machine* backup. I also get the message: "The backup is too large for the backup volume. The backup requires 23.5GB but only 14.6GB is available." My PC no longer recognises my card. How can I restore the card?

Ian Dunnington

Q&A EXTRA | Essential Mac advice from www.macfixit.com

WHEN FORCE QUIT DOESN'T WORK

Mac OS X's force quit mechanism can be a boon when an application freezes, often consuming a large amount of system resources as it flails. However, force quits don't always execute properly, leaving hung or stalled applications in their problematic states.

As described by user Jude Kim on the Apple Discussion boards: "After an application hangs forever, I try to force quit. I get the message pop-up window saying that the application has been forced to quit unexpectedly, or something like that. But even after that message, there's still a blue light under the application. I can't restart the application and most annoyingly, I can't shut down the computer unless I shut it off with the power switch. I've had this problem since I got this computer, please help me."

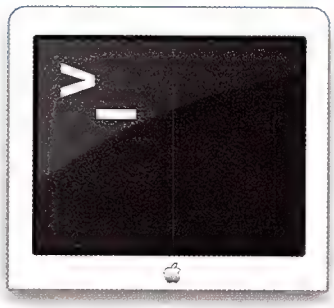
Fortunately, Apple's **Force Quit** dialog box is only one of the many ways of targeting a process to kill it. Here are the alternatives:

ACTIVITY MONITOR

Use *Activity Monitor* to display a list of all the processes running on the computer. You can see if one is displayed improperly or if it's using up large amounts of resources, and then kill it specifically to see if that clears the hang.

THE TERMINAL

Use the *Terminal* to kill a process by PID (Process ID). The PID can be looked up several ways, but



the most common are to use *Activity Monitor* or the command line-equivalent 'top'. Using the command line is a more basic approach to killing the process.

In some cases – in which a single application causes the Mac OS X kernel to become extremely busy and slows the system to a halt – having a **Terminal** window open can prove beneficial. If you're lucky enough to have a **Terminal** window open, and can switch to it, you can kill processes that you otherwise would not be able to (since it's virtually impossible to launch *Activity Viewer* or the *Terminal* after a thrashing (freezing) process starts.

When the freeze ensues, switch to the **Terminal** window and then type the following code command:

```
top
```

Press [Enter]. You'll be presented with a list of currently running processes. Scan down the

FILE SECURITY | Password protect an external HDD

Q Staff at SuperDuper! have just informed me that you cannot password protect an external HDD and still use it for backups and be bootable. My iMac and PowerBook are password protected if booted. If the HDD is taken out, and put in an HDD enclosure, can anyone just access the files?
Tony Furniss

A Yes, unless you're using FileVault. Your iMac and PowerBook have passwords to prevent unauthorised users from logging in to the operating system. This prevents someone from getting at your hard disk, providing that they use your current OS X installation to access the disk. This won't prevent them from reinstalling the OS with a username of their choice, nor simply booting to another OS from a CD or external drive or even just resetting the password with the install DVD. If they took the hard disk out, they could also access it from a different machine. Using an Open Firmware password (which you can enable by booting from the Leopard install disc) will keep them from booting your machine with a different disc, but it still won't stop them from stealing your HDD.

If you need to protect your files even if the disk is removed or a different operating system is booted, you need to encrypt them. This will make them illegible unless they're decrypted with a password only you know. Instead of your password acting as a gatekeeper, it will now behave like a translator, and a thief has no hope of ever accessing your data without it. You can't boot from an encrypted volume, though, because the decryption is performed by the operating system. If the operating system is itself on the encrypted volume, it's impossible to load it. This is the reason why FileVault only encrypts your **Home** folders.

Encrypt your files to protect them on an external hard drive.

A Two things: first tell *Time Machine* not to use this card as a backup volume. Open *Time Machine*'s **Preferences** and click the **Change Disk** button to choose which disk gets used for backing up. Second, reformat the card with a filing system that both Windows and OS X will recognise. Open *Disk Utilities*, select the volume corresponding to the ExpressCard and click the **Erase** tab. Make sure the volume format is set to **MS-DOS (FAT)** and click **Erase**. The card should now be recognised in both computers.

IS THE AIRPORT PROBLEM FIXED YET?

Q I bought a MacBook around Christmas last year. It didn't come with Leopard pre-installed but there was a separate disc. My friend told me there's a bug with MacBooks in that they don't let you connect to the internet via AirPort. So is it safe to upgrade to Leopard?
Marvin Paranoid Android

A Upgrading the operating system is never entirely risk-free, but the AirPort drivers are a lot more stable than they were on first release. And in any case, a new MacBook is the least likely to suffer from problems. Opt to **Archive and Install** and you'll be able to roll back if you find problems, but I'm quite confident that you'll be fine. I gave my daughter a MacBook for Christmas and AirPort works fine on her machine. Hardly a robust statistical sample I know, but certainly an encouraging sign.

RAID IS NOT WORKING WITH MY SETUP

Q I have a Mac Pro and it's running Leopard 10.5.2. I've recently broken one of my other machines and have a number of disks available. I would like to change my Mac to have a striped RAID set of four 250MB disks to improve its I/O throughput.

My question is, how do I go about moving the installation of Leopard and applications I currently have to a striped RAID set? Do I just take a backup with some piece of software and restore it to the RAID array after I've created it, or do I have to reinstall all the software and just restore my user content?
Bob Spring

A Let me save you several hours, three disks and a whole lot of heartache: striped RAID (also called RAID 0) does not improve performance in real-world situations. The theory is all terribly sound – by dividing a file into alternating stripes of data that are written to different disks, you ought to reduce file seek latency and increase overall transfer bandwidth, because each disk can independently deliver its stripe in parallel with the others in the RAID set. It's just that it doesn't work. Study after study has shown that the only thing RAID 0 improves to any noticeable degree is disk performance benchmarks. Application load times? No difference. Swap file paging? No difference. Saving large documents? No difference. Or at least, no difference that comes anywhere near ►

QUICK TIP

Dock your applications

Instead of filling your Dock with lots of individual programs, you can drag the entire **Applications** folder to the folders section of the Dock and click it to quickly access whichever one you want. Using **Grid** view also makes it much easier to display lots of applications at once.

Command column for *Safari* (or whatever application is causing the issue) and note the number next to it in the PID column. Once you've found the PID, press the [Q] key to exit the top program, then enter the following command, replacing (PID) with the actual number – and without parentheses:

kill (PID)

Press [Enter]. With any luck, the thrashing will stop and you'll be able to re-grain control of the Mac – or at least gain enough responsiveness to access and save currently open work.

FORCE SHUTDOWN

If things get worse and you need to force a shutdown of the whole system, try the following: Instead of using *Finder*'s menus to shut down, try using the *Terminal* to issue the shutdown command. Open it and type **shutdown -h now** (or **shutdown -r now** for a reboot).

PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

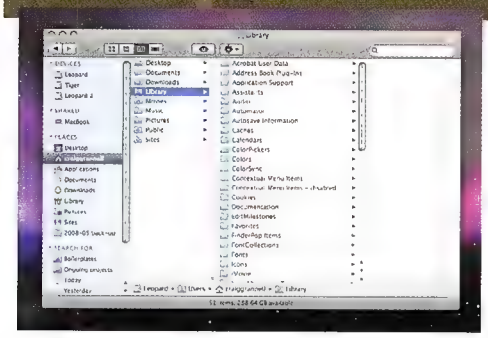
Since the problem seems to occur for specific programs, that indicates the problem may lie with the program or some of its resources. Whenever a preferences file or other resource gets corrupted the program often has a hard time reading it.

Try removing the program's .plist file and restarting the program. Such .plist files will generally be located in the **~/Library/Preferences** folder, and labelled as follows: com.(name of developer).(name of product).plist [for example, com.adobe.Reader7.0.plist for *Adobe Reader 7.0*].

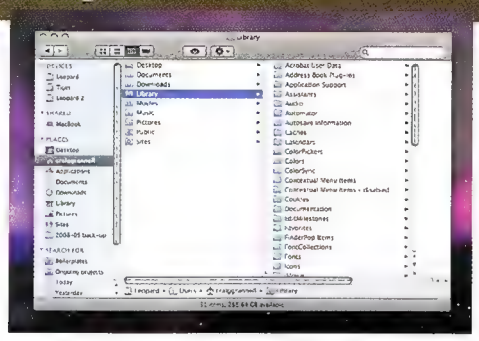
Simply drag the potentially offending .plist file to the Trash, re-launch the hampered application, and check to see if the problem's solved. In some cases, applications will have several .plist files, so make sure you check for any that contain the product name. Also, note that you may lose some settings or other personal data used by specific applications when these files are deleted.

You can also use Spotlight to find other files the program has created in your user

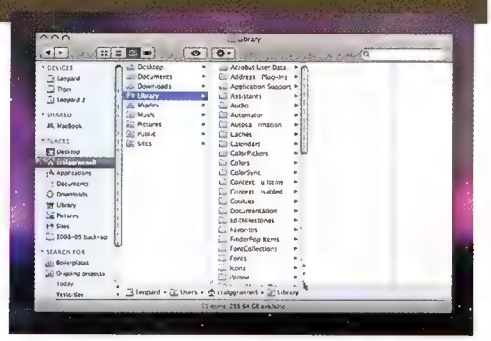
STEP BY STEP Keyboard shortcuts for resizing Finder's columns



01 In *Finder*'s **column** view, file and folder names too wide for the columns are truncated. Although you can manually drag the column handle under a scroll bar to see more of the names in the parent column, double-clicking a handle resizes the column to fit the longest name.



02 If you hold down the [⌥] key when double-clicking, all columns in *Finder* are resized to the full width view of the current column. This can be handy when you want to temporarily expand all of the columns within the currently visible document path.



03 To revert all *Finder* columns to a user-definable width, hold the [⌥] key when dragging any column's drag-handle. You'll see that all *Finder* window columns on the screen update to your new setting, as will those in any new *Finder* windows opened. ●

Drag documents to print

You can drag a printer from the **Print & Fax** preferences pane onto your desktop and print documents directly by dragging them onto that. You can also drag it from the Desktop into the *Finder* sidebar.

justifying the cost, effort and reduced data reliability of running a RAID 0 array.

THE INVISIBLE MIDI KEYBOARD

Q **My external MIDI keyboard is not recognised. Well, it's sort of recognised. On my iMac I go to Applications > Utilities > Audio MIDI Setup and it's there all right.**

Until a while ago all was well; I could input notes into both *Logic Pro 8* and *Sibelius 5* with my external MIDI keyboard (Evolution MK261). But lately this will not happen because it keeps losing its contact with the computer. I can restore its contact with the above-mentioned facility – I press Rescan MIDI and the connection is restored – and I can happily work the keyboard for hours – until I have to quit the program and maybe reset the computer. Next time I open either of the music programs the MIDI keyboard is again unknown until I do all the above again. What do you think's causing this connection to break, disappear or whatever? It's a USB connection and I've tried moving it to another slot, but it makes no difference. I don't think it's a hardware problem. Do you think there's a software bug lurking?

Terry Dwyer

A It sounds more like a USB detection issue. Sometimes USB devices don't correctly handle your Mac entering sleep state and they'll lose track of the host computer, possibly entering their own power-saving mode, but one from which they never return because they aren't listening to the USB bus any more. This can happen at an application level as well as a driver level, though. It's possible that *Logic Pro* and *Sibelius* trigger a MIDI scan when they start up. If the keyboard is already switched on at this point they'll see it. But if you have turned the keyboard off while you give the computer a rest and don't turn it back on until the software has already loaded, it might not be spotted without manually rescanning the MIDI interface using the *Audio MIDI Setup*. Try leaving the keyboard switched on and see if that helps.

BANISH THE BONG FOR A QUIET STARTUP

Q **How do you turn off the infernal 'bong' just after pressing the power button on bootup. It keeps making my dog jump!**

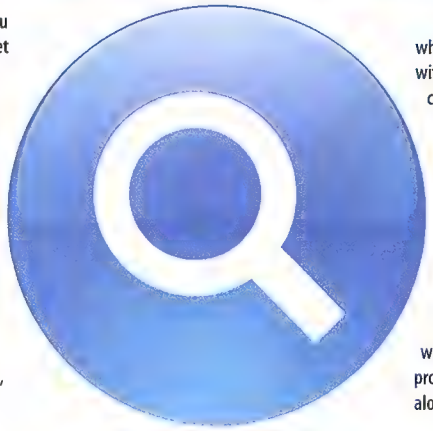
Mike Shacklock

A I'd love to be able to say that it can't be done, because I love the bong – it's so cheery! Sadly, it's quite easy. Hold the **mute** key down when you start up until you see the Apple logo, and you'll skip the bong for that boot. If, however, you're using a Mac mini or a keyboard without a mute key, you can turn the

Q&A EXTRA | Essential Mac advice from www.macfixit.com

library folder, and remove or delete them. You should note that doing this will most likely get rid of your personal settings for the program, but most of the time re-entering them in the program's settings will set things up properly once again.

Additionally, this kill method is only safe for applications that are bundled in one package. Many complex programs put vital items all over the place when they install, and removing them could break the program or reduce its functionality. If the program has built-in maintenance tools, run them. For example, *Safari* has a **Reset Safari** feature that completely clears caches, cookies, history and preferences.



Finally, you can remove and reinstall the whole program. Hopefully the program came with an uninstaller script or utility. If not, you can use the handy tool *AppZapper* (**www.appzapper.com**), which helps target a particular application's installed resources for easy removal.

Note that an application can hang for multiple reasons, and unfortunately it isn't always the program itself that's the problem. For instance, OS X has an automatic spellchecker that's accessed by many programs. If something goes wrong with the spellchecker, then chances are any program that accesses the spellchecker will hang along with it.

TIPS SUPPLIED BY MACFIXIT.COM

MacFixIt, founded in 1996 by Ted Landau, has grown into the premiere destination for users seeking resolutions to bugs and conflicts. Visit **www.macfixit.com** for the latest Mac information.

MacFixIt
Troubleshooting Solutions for the Macintosh

To silence the bootup bong on a Mac mini, boot with the mute key held down. You'll then forever be able to power up your Mac in peace.

sound all the way down before you shut down and the bong won't sound the next time you boot up. Alternatively, if you want to disable it completely you can download a new preferences pane from **http://macupdate.com/info.php/id/16425** called *StartupSound* that will do the trick.

PROBLEMATIC EMAIL AND PREFERENCES

Q My current setup is 10.4.11 on a 2.1GHz PPC G5 iMac and I'm having a few problems with *Mail*:

1. All my emails now open with long headers. Even if I go into View and switch to default headers, they still come out with long headers.

2. Deleted mail… reappears. I've done virus scans and I don't appear to have a virus, so why does it keep reappearing?

3. The Character palette constantly flashes up over anything I'm doing. I have tried using *Activity Monitor* to see if some task is looping and killing it, but it's not in there long enough to kill and, to be honest, I'm not 100% sure which task I should be killing anyway.

I've tried deleting *Mail* Preferences to get a fresh preferences list (after taking a backup). This cured some issues but then left me with no mail folders structure – not good, so I had to reinstate my backup. I've tried zapping PRAM to clear back to default settings, but this didn't seem to do much. I've tried deleting mail and securely emptying the Trash straight away but this didn't seem to resolve things either.

Jamie

A In reverse order then. I've never heard of the **Character** palette engaging in this kind of stalking behaviour but it does sometimes do the exact reverse and refuse to appear at all. This is caused by a corruption in the international data cache. Deleting the following from System/Library/Caches is all it takes to fix that:

com.apple.IntlDataCache.le
com.apple.IntlDataCache.le.kbdx
com.apple.IntlDataCache.le.sbdl
com.apple.IntlDataCache.le.tecx

My conjecture is that "never appearing" is just the flip side of a coin that has "always appearing" on its obverse and possibly international data cache corruptions are causing both.

Reappearing mail has nothing to do with a virus. In fact, a handy rule of computer troubleshooting that I have distilled from 18 years of tech support is it's never a virus. This rule holds true even for Windows PCs so imagine how much more absolute it must be for the Mac. Anyway, who ever heard of a virus that undeletes files? That would be like a strain of bird flu that made you stronger or improved digestive transit or something. No, much more likely is that this is caused by *iSync*. If *iSync* gets out of sync, it can end up copying all your deleted mail back down from your .Mac account. This is easily fixable by doing a sync reset (System Preferences > .Mac > Advanced).

I've saved your long mail headers problem until last because I don't know the answer. I've never seen this problem and I can't find anyone on the internet who has either. You've already deleted the *Mail* **Preferences**, but have your tried deleting the mailbox files themselves? These are in Library/Mail/Mailboxes. *Mail* sets the header properties for each message separately, but if you set long headers and then move a message to another folder, the headers revert to short ones. This means that they must be stored along with the message itself in the mailbox database file. Try creating a new mailbox and moving messages into this. Does this reset the header? What about creating a *Mail* rule to divert new messages to this new folder. Do they arrive with long or short headers? ●

ON THE FORUM

Swift responses to members' questions

Q I'm beginning to have problems with my three-year-old PowerBook G4, it's not always waking up when it goes to sleep. Right now I'm not sure if I can see a pattern or not. The most recent time that it happened the laptop had just been left open and on, and had gone to sleep with the little blinking light. It then refused to wake up. I had to disconnect the power and take the battery out to get it to reboot.

I've repaired the disk and permissions and ran the hardware test from the original install DVD all without reporting any problems.

Does anyone have any pointers as to how I could begin to track this down? Is there anything that I can look for in my log files?

Oly Joined: 28 Apr 2005 Posts: 48

A [illegible]

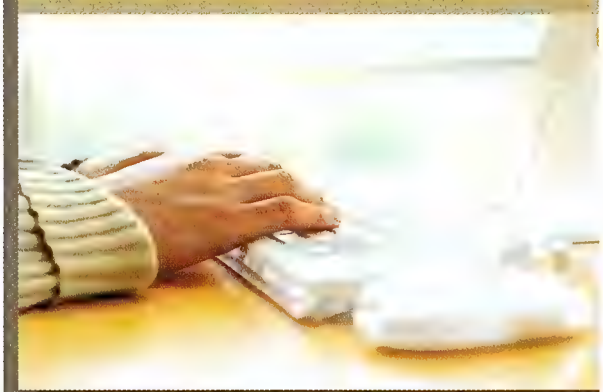
Q I have an old 700MHz eMac running 10.2, which still runs well, and I decided to upgrade the memory from the previous 2x 128MB by adding 512MB. Information on the web indicated the eMac had only two memory slots, but when I looked up *System Profiler* it gave the following info:

Location.....Type.....Size
UNUSED.....empty
DIMM/J1600...SDRAM...128MB
DIMM/J1601...SDRAM...128MB

I took that to mean there were actually three slots, with one unused and therefore empty. But of course, when I opened it up there were only two visible. Now it doesn't matter too much, 512 + 128 = 640MB, which is quite sufficient and I can use the spare 128MB elsewhere, but I found this confusing. It's obviously not a major matter, but is there another slot that I didn't find, or did Apple *System Profiler* give the wrong information?

Unkle E Joined: 07 Sep 2005 Posts: 46 Location: Sydney, Australia

A [illegible]



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YOUR PICTURES. OUR PASSION.

We've been busy playing with the amazing new iMac for most of this month. We plumped for the 24-inch 3.06GHz model and merrily whiled the time away seeing what it can do. Our two-page review starts over the page.

Elsewhere in our hardware section, we have the Canon 450D. It's a standout product that should be on any budding DSLR photographer's wishlist, and Gear4 surprised us all with a decent desktop iPod speaker, the Duo.

Our software section is brimming with great new releases and updates to popular products. The section is a mix of inexpensive productivity releases like *OpenOffice.org* and *PDFClerk*, and more creative titles like *Peak LE* for music editing and *Toon Boom Studio 4* for 2D animation work.

We also have our regular shareware round-up and this issue's Group Test, which looks at sub-£150 compact cameras.

James

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Reviews

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Our logos explained

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★★★★☆	Very Good – recommended
★★★☆☆	Good – but you could buy better
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★☆☆☆☆	Poor – keep your money in your wallet

DESKTOP MAC

Apple 3.06GHz 24-inch iMac

£1,389 Apple's latest 24-inch iMac is a formidable desktop computer for the home, the office, or anywhere!

CONTACT INFO

Manufacturer Apple
www.apple.com/uk
Latest price on TechRadar
www.techradar.com/379780

KEY SPECS

Processor: 3.06GHz Intel Core 2 Duo (6MB shared L2 cache) **Display:** 24-inch glossy widescreen LCD **Memory:** 2GB 800MHz DDR2 SDRAM (2x1GB) **Graphics:** NVIDIA GeForce 8800 GS w/512MB GDDR3 RAM (3.06GHz iMac only) **Hard drive:** 500GB Serial ATA Drive (750GB, 1TB optional) **Optical drive:** SuperDrive 8x (DVD±R DL/DVD±RW/CD-RW) **Connectivity:** AirPort Extreme, Bluetooth 2.1 + EDR **Extras:** Apple Mighty Mouse, Apple Keyboard (English), User's Guide

FOR AND AGAINST

- Powerful new components
- Price unchanged
- Excellent graphics card
- Gorgeous screen
- Fantastic overall performance
- Superb keyboard

VERDICT

★★★★★

"A predictably wonderful Mac that is especially graced by the monstrous graphics card. Excellent value for money."

We've reviewed the top-spec 24-inch iMac here, but Apple has upgraded the full line-up.

The hardy iMac, which was first announced to the world a decade ago this summer, is responsible for a significant chunk of Apple's success. Back in 1998, you'll remember that it was the brightly coloured, translucent iMac that reaffirmed Apple's reputation as a hot design house and groundbreaking computer-maker in one. It cut out swathes of market share for the firm, just when Apple needed a hasty financial shot in the arm, and went on to become an iconic product – the root of all other products with the 'i' prefix.

Apple's all-rounder

Blooming out of those halcyon days into more recent years, Macs have moved out of the art department and into the mainstream, and this widespread adoption has been a joy to watch. Today, Apple has some 20% of the US consumer market stitched up.

Our last iMac review, which was a first look at the aluminium body some nine months ago, was easily the most-read article on our sister site TechRadar.com when we posted it up. It got serious hits because the audience for the iMac is so wide; people regard it as both a home computer and an office workstation. It has an air of accessibility and power by the bucketload.

This month, the iMac has been significantly updated again to help maintain its edge. It's a generous upgrade. Beyond bringing in Intel's hot little Penryn processors, Apple has rewired the guts of the iMac to dramatically boost the speed that data can travel between the cores and other components, while also updating the RAM, graphics ability and hard drive specs. The machine we're reviewing here is the top-end 3.06GHz 24-inch iMac.

Apple has stuck with the 20-inch and 24-inch sizes. You can get a better look at the current specs on Apple's website than we have space for here, but in a nutshell, the Penryn processors are entirely new to iMacs, more power efficient and faster than the Merom chips they replace. The system bus, which ferries data to and fro between the processor cores and other components, has had its bandwidth widened from 800MHz to 1,066MHz, so data can be routed faster, and the standard RAM allocation is now 2GB on all models except the entry level 20-inch iMac, which has 1GB as a single stick. There are two RAM slots in each iMac, allowing for up to 4GB of RAM. RAM is still considerably cheaper to buy and install yourself than let Apple do it.

> "It's the first 'non-Pro' Mac to breach the 3GHz glass ceiling and breathe the same rarefied air as the Mac Pro"

The fastest iMac

Our test model is the first 'non-Pro' Mac to breach the 3GHz glass ceiling and breathe the same rarefied air as the Mac Pro. It also features a new, different graphics card to the other iMacs. The 3.06GHz 24-inch iMac uses the NVIDIA GeForce 8800 GS, which is an only slightly tuned-down version of the cracking NVIDIA GeForce 8800 GT card used in the Mac Pro, but with the same whopping 512MB of dedicated RAM. The only difference we can find between the GS (iMac) and GT (Mac Pro) is a slightly lower clock speed (550MHz as opposed to 600MHz). What's 50MHz between friends?

TOP FEATURES | Six great reasons to admire the new iMac

New chips
The processors are Intel's Core 2 Duo Penryn chips. They are faster and more power efficient than the previous Merom chips, and allow for components such as the bus and RAM to be improved, too.

Quality screen
The 24-inch iMacs all come with 8-bit TFT widescreen displays that produce gorgeous resolution and millions of colours without having to dither pixels.

Apple Keyboard
A fantastic, responsive, super-slim keyboard comes in every box. It hugs the desk, which removes the need for wrist elevation.

Graphics
Our 3.06GHz iMac has an NVIDIA GeForce 8800 GS graphics card that's nearly identical to the Mac Pro's card. As a result, it's fantastic for playing games or editing video.

Software
The size of the screen allows the iMac to double as a TV. This is aided by movie rentals in *iTunes* and the *Front Row* media-centre software that comes bundled.

Speakers
The speakers on the iMac are superb. The sound is great and they're loud for a desktop Mac. We doubt you'll need external speakers to enjoy movies.

The faster chips, new graphics card and pipes that surround it have improved the graphics performance, and combine to make it one very competitive computer for playing games and excellent for all aspects of video and graphics. The display is great, too; the 24-inch iMacs feature 8-bit TFT widescreens that achieve millions of colours without employing dithering techniques, unlike the 20-inch iMacs with their 6-bit displays.

The exterior of the iMac remains unchanged. This is the same all-in-one aluminium design as before, with built-in webcam, IR remote and generous screen size and connection options. The software includes the Leopard OS and *iLife '08* package, plus Apple's excellent *Front Row* media application.

As you might expect from a newly rewired computer with faster processors and new components, the new iMac is considerably faster than predecessors and zips right through chunky processing commands. We benchmarked the CPU and hard disk and threw in an audio-encoding test. We then tested the graphics card and processor with 3D rendering tasks and movie encoding.

Compared to a 2.0GHz aluminium iMac with equal RAM from eight months ago, the new 3.06GHz iMac scored some 60% faster in our CPU test – testament to the Penryn prowess and value of the FSB upgrade. This score was also 3% ahead of a year-old, entry-level 2.66GHz Mac Pro, and only marginally behind an eight-core 2.8GHz Mac Pro with equivalent memory.

This is not to say that the iMac and Mac Pro are equally matched for heavy rendering and graphics work. It's more that you will only see the Mac Pro accelerate away from the iMac when all its extra cores are being driven hard by software and workload that can properly exploit them.

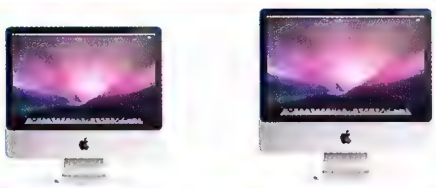
Our audio-encoding test produced an anomaly. Committing a CD to *iTunes* as high-quality AAC files took only 5 minutes, 49 seconds on the 20-inch 2GHz machine but 7 minutes, 43 seconds on the 24-inch 3.06GHz iMac. After triple checking, we couldn't explain why. Perhaps Apple's rewiring and repowering efforts reduced the optical drive's comparative efficiency as a side effect of optimising the rest of the system. Answers on a postcard, please.

> "Compared to a 2.0GHz aluminium iMac with equal RAM, the 3.06GHz iMac was 60% faster in our CPU test"

Buying advice
The new 3.06GHz 24-inch iMac is a wonderful Mac that continues the strong tradition. The screen is gorgeous and the graphics ability phenomenal for what some people still pigeon-hole as a 'family' Mac. With the entertainment software package that comes bundled for free, and the stability of the OS, this is an excellent choice for general-purpose computing or even hard number-crunching, and at 24 inches, this could easily be your new TV, too.

James Ellerbeck

BENCHMARKS | Compare the old and the new



	iMac 20-inch	iMac 24-inch
Processor	2.0GHz Intel Core 2 Duo (Merom)	3.06GHz Intel Core 2 Duo (Pernyn)
Operating system	Mac OS X 10.5 (Leopard)	Mac OS X 10.5 (Leopard)
Rendering in Cinebench* (Single CPU)	2,171	3,242
Rendering in Cinebench* (Multi CPU)	4,088	6,266
Audio encoding in iTunes†	5 mins 49 secs	7 mins 53 secs
Exporting movie in Quicktime Pro†	6 mins 54 secs	4 mins 41 secs
Processor test*	115	189

*Higher is better; †Lower is better. *Cinebench* is a widely used benchmarking tool based on the powerful 3D rendering software, *Cinema 4D*. The processor test is run using *Xbench*. Both *Cinebench* and *Xbench* can be downloaded from the internet for free. The audio-encoding test involved timing the import of Brian Eno's *Ambient 4: On Land* CD into *iTunes* as 128 kbps AAC files. The movie-encoding test involved exporting a movie clip from *Quicktime Pro*, ready to play on an iPod. Results may vary between equal Macs, depending on several factors such as wear and tear, installed software and the version of the OS installed.

EXTERNAL HARD DRIVE

Buffalo 500GB DriveStation Combo 4

£120 A large external drive with a small desktop footprint

CONTACT INFO

Manufacturer Buffalo
www.buffalotech.com
Latest price on TechRadar
www.techradar.com/380224

KEY SPECS

Weight: 2.4kg **Size:** 3.5x23x13.5cm
Capacity: 500GB **Connections:** 1x USB 2.0, 2x FireWire 800, 1x FireWire 400, 1x eSATA

FOR AND AGAINST

- (+) Inexpensive
- (+) Generous connection options
- (+) Small desktop footprint
- (+) Quiet
- (−) Can get hot
- (−) No LED status indicator except on/off

VERDICT

★★★★

"Some build quality issues, but offers generous connection options at a reasonable price."

Housing a single 500GB Samsung HD501LJ drive, the DriveStation Combo 4 offers a whopping amount of storage, certainly enough to hold a few years worth of family photos and music, and plenty for the organised professional. It also gives you plenty of ways to connect it to your Mac and can be used as a *Time Machine* drive right out of the box.

Unlike the Western Digital My Book Studio II, reviewed below, there's no RAID option with this drive, but RAID isn't for everyone. The enclosure is fairly basic, but that has a stronger attraction for people who just want something to work right away.

The speed of the drive was impressive. It has two FireWire 800 ports, one FireWire 400 port, one USB 2.0 port and one eSATA port. The FireWire 800 random uncached write speed was 36.76 MB/sec, the same test over FireWire 400 returned 32.60 MB/sec and 28.4 MB/sec over USB 2.0 (we didn't test the eSATA port). So not too shabby for this type of drive, but note that the My Book Studio II is much faster over FireWire 800 in RAID 0.

The one thing we would ask for in the next caddy update is some kind of activity indicator on the front panel. There's nothing to show the different functions of the drive, or the current volume of data on the drive at a glance. By contrast, nearly all of Western Digital's drives, including the whole My Book range, carry an LED indicator to tell you what the drive is doing, including warnings of possible danger.

This tiny drive would benefit from some kind of LED activity indicator.

It's a quiet drive but after a day of activity is was quite hot to the touch. Also, the material used for the external caddy chips easily, and two of the legs on the four-legged stand buckled during our 'knock' test, which involves dropping a book on the drive. So we had some build quality concerns, though not enough to mark the drive down too badly.
James Ellerbeck

DESKTOP RAID

WD My Book Studio II 2TB

£329 A chunky storage box with RAID and eSATA connectivity

CONTACT INFO

Manufacturer Western Digital
www.wdc.com
Latest price on TechRadar
www.techradar.co.uk/225180

KEY SPECS

Weight: 1.8kg **Size:** 9.8x16.5x15.0cm
Capacity: 2TB **RAID:** 0 & 1 **Connections:** eSATA, FireWire 800, FireWire 400, USB 2.0

FOR AND AGAINST

- (+) Good value
- (+) Easy to set up
- (+) Huge capacity
- (+) Great desktop looks
- (−) eSATA currently holds limited appeal
- (−) Clunky bundled data back-up software

VERDICT

★★★★

"Competitively priced and friendly to use with plenty of connection options."

WD My Book Studio II is a preformatted HFS+ (journaled) drive that's available in 1TB and 2TB sizes. It would suit a freelance photographer or music producer needing to access large files locally, or someone less productive who wants to future-proof their storage needs. You can set it up as your *Time Machine* drive too.

It can be configured for RAID 0 or RAID 1 (mirrored) usage. The connections are two FW 800 ports, one USB 2.0 and an eSATA port. Cables come in the box for the different port types except for eSATA, which is not yet a common port type. You can buy an eSATA card and install it on a Mac Pro or later-issue Power Mac G5 Tower.

It's hard to offer a single figure that sums up how fast the drive is, because that depends what you use it for. In RAID 0, which offers no data protection, the random uncached write speed was 55.5 MB/sec over FireWire 800 and 27.1 MB/sec over USB 2.0. In RAID 1, which mirrors the drive so that your data is backed up, speed dropped to 38.4 MB/sec over FireWire 800 and 26.87 MB/sec over USB 2.0. Those speeds are competitive but to make sense of these figures yourself download *Xbench* from **www.xbench.com** and run it on your Mac to get a rough comparison.

Software comes in the box for changing the configuration of the drive. Once loaded a 'WD' icon appears in the header menu. This was easy to access and use. You also get a trial version of a tool for backing up you data, but we found this clunky and much prefer using *SuperDuper!*, another free download.

Plenty of connectivity options are on offer with the Studio II, including eSATA.

There were complaints that the first My Book Studio was noisy, but this isn't an issue with this version. On price the My Book is competitive and the per GB cost is great.
James Ellerbeck

BUDGET SLR FOR KEEN AMATEURS

Canon EOS 450D

£550 Canon's new 450D is the latest model to enter the insanely competitive budget SLR market

Canon's EOS 400D has been instrumental in driving the budget SLR market. Now the Japanese giant has released an upgrade to the 400D, the 450D. The main changes are two million more pixels, a new, easier-to-handle chassis and Live View, which shows what the camera is 'seeing' on the rear LCD.

Certainly, having two million extra pixels to play with is helpful, if hardly earth shattering. Canon's 12-megapixel sensor does a good job of keeping noise down and image quality high, and that extra capacity means you can enlarge your pictures, or crop them aggressively in software while retaining detail.

The Digic III image processor also helps to deliver smooth, well-saturated colours. It has to be said, though, that JPEG images taken with the 450D are on the soft side. This appears to be an issue with the camera's internal processing, rather than with the quality, image-stabilised lens. All digital photos require some sharpening, and it's a definite requirement for 450D owners. We don't regard this as a fatal flaw, however, as anyone who goes to the expense of buying an SLR should try shooting in RAW for maximum, uncompressed quality. And RAW images taken with the 450D are really very good, as well as being a joy to process using the supplied *Digital Photo Professional* software.

Taking great RAW shots is also helped by the improved camera interface. There's now a dedicated ISO button for adjusting light sensitivity, and you can whack up the ISO over 1,000 without noise becoming a problem. Meanwhile a Highlight Tone Priority function helps to preserve detail in the brighter parts of the image. The 450D is quick too, and can shoot 3.5 frames per second. Top burst speed lets you fire off six RAW shots or an impressive 53 high-quality JPEGs.

As for the new Live View feature, it's certainly useful. Live View makes it easier to compose still life, for example, or arrange a portrait shot without constantly squinting through the viewfinder. What's more you can call up a live histogram so you can check the exposure range before you take the shot. Just be aware that Live View will drain the batteries quicker.

Tested alone, the 450D seems like a no-brainer for £550 with a great 18-55 lens. Canon's problem is that the equally attractive Nikon D80 and Sony A350 SLRs are selling for £50 less. If you're a Canon fan looking to upgrade the 450D is an obvious buy, but we wouldn't blame more agnostic photographers for going for a cheaper option.

Geoff Harris

KEY SPECS

12-megapixel sensor, 14-bit RAW capability, ISO up to 1,600, Digic III processor, 9-point Autofocus, 3-inch LCD with Live View, SD memory, 3.5fps motordrive

CONTACT INFO

Manufacturer Canon
www.canon.co.uk
Latest price on TechRadar
www.techradar.com/301270

PROS AND CONS

- (+) Quality image-stabilising lens included
- (+) Low-noise images below ISO 1,000
- (+) New Live View mode to aid composition
- (+) Dedicated ISO button
- (−) JPEGs need sharpening
- (−) Still pricey compared to rivals

VERDICT

★★★★☆

"The 450D has lots of useful extras but isn't a clear market leader. If this is your first SLR, check out the equally good (and cheaper) Nikon D80 before deciding."

PORTABLE HARD DISK CASE WITH ENCRYPTION

2.5-inch SATA Case to USB with RFID

£26 A wallet-friendly way to keep sensitive data locked up

CONTACT INFO

Manufacturer Storage Depot
www.storagedepot.co.uk
Latest price on TechRadar
www.techradar.com/380613

KEY SPECS

Encryption: 128-bit AES **Unlocking mechanism:** RFID **Number of tags supplied:** 2

FOR AND AGAINST

- ⊕ Secures your data
- ⊕ Cheap
- ⊕ Easy to use
- ⊕ Convenient
- ⊖ HFS+ not a supported format
- ⊖ Susceptible to determined attack

VERDICT

★★★★½

"A cheap enclosure for 2.5-inch SATA drives that also helps keep your data secure."

The problem with an ordinary external hard disk is that anyone can plug it into a computer and read its contents. And the problem with some systems that encrypt information on disks or flash storage devices is that they usually need Windows-only software to run on the computer you're connecting the drive to before they can be unlocked.

This enclosure – which can accept any standard 2.5-inch SATA hard disk such as those used in the MacBook line – gets round both problems by including hardware-controlled encryption that's unlocked by an RFID tag. The practical upshot of this is that when you plug the drive into a Mac or PC, it doesn't mount until you press one of the two supplied keys to the casing to unlock the drive. The use of RFID – small electronic tags that store small amounts of identifying data – is certainly convenient in this context, though there are concerns about the robustness of the security of RFID systems.

The data on the hard disk is encrypted using the 128-bit AES standard – good enough for the US government for anything up to 'secret' – which means that even if you take the drive out of the case, it won't mount when fitted into another enclosure.

Frustratingly, the enclosure seemed to be very picky about which USB cables would bus-power the drive, and though we didn't have any problems with HFS+ when testing, the manual states that only MS-DOS is supported.

It's hardly a thing of beauty, but this enclosure does keep your data safe.

The case itself couldn't really be described as pretty, but it does seem to do the job. It's not impossible that someone with sufficient resources and motivation could crack the encryption on this drive and, at least in the abstract, the RFID system could be a weak link, but unless you're involved in international espionage, this is unlikely to be a real issue.
Christopher Phin

PHOTO PRINTER

Canon Selphy ES2

£131 Canon repackages the ES1 in a new chassis with a bigger LCD

CONTACT INFO

Manufacturer Canon
www.canon.co.uk
Latest price on TechRadar
www.techradar.com/380377

KEY SPECS

Connections: common card formats, Wi-Fi, USB ports, PictBridge **Display:** 3-inch colour TFT **Size:** 21.3x18.9x13cm **Weight:** 2kg

FOR AND AGAINST

- ⊕ Good colour
- ⊕ Superb low-light resolution
- ⊕ Large colour LCD
- ⊕ Competitive price per print
- ⊖ No panoramic print option
- ⊖ No retractable USB cable anymore

VERDICT

★★★½

"Still a very good printer but we would like to see the ink and paper in separate cartridges."

The Selphy ES2 is a quiet desktop mini-lab photo printer that produces good quality 10x5cm prints in a little over a minute and a quarter. It's an update to the ES1 and includes a bigger 3-inch colour LCD, though that's about the only technical improvement we noticed. The button layout has changed slightly, but in the main it looks like Canon has just reboxed the ES1 with a new screen and upped the price.

This is a dye-sublimation printer. Unlike other dye-subs on the shelves the paper doesn't slide in and out the back of the printer, instead it loops around inside the machine, thus saving space. Correspondingly, it's a taller, more upright design, and one that uses a single cartridge for supplying both ink and paper. The printer has red-eye correction, the standard browsing buttons and a few gimmicky clip art features such as speech bubbles and virtual frames. The ES2 lacks a panoramic printing option, which is a shame. A battery bay is on board too, though the actually battery is an optional extra.

Colour representation was well saturated and the printer coped well with-low light areas of the composition. But skin tones did look pale and highlights were a little washed out. The price per print works out at around 18p, which is competitive for a mini-lab.

Nearly everything you need is on the printer, though one loss is the removal of the retractable USB cable, which on the ES1 is coiled away for tidy storage. Perhaps Canon is right in assuming that fewer people print from a Mac than directly from a camera card?

The space-saving design of the Selphy means it should tuck neatly into any corner of your home or office.

The Selphy is a decent, if unremarkable, mini-lab update. If you're in the market for a mini-lab consider this one alongside the excellent Epson PictureMate 260 and 290.
James Ellerbeck

iPOD HI-FI

Gear4 Duo

£112 A convenient two-in-one design for taking on a trip or listening to at home

Speakers for iPods come two-a-penny these days, but this one caught our attention, mainly because it's surprisingly good for the price. It also has a clever design that splits into two parts, so you can release the slim speaker from the bass bin section and use it alone on battery power for short trips.

The overall build quality is impressive. The drivers – the cones that actually produce the sounds – are well protected behind a metal grill and the mechanism that locks the two parts of the hi-fi in place is both well thought out and solidly constructed. The fold-down iPod dock is also good quality and, unlike as can happen with similar docks, the iPod didn't wobble in its hinge.

FEATURES

Size: 13.5x230x150mm **iPod compatibility:** iPod touch, nano (2G, 3G), classic (160, 80GB/video 80, 60 30GB) **Extras:** IR Remote, DC power supply, trays for different iPods

This gave us some optimism about the life expectancy of the Duo.

The sound quality is acceptable, if not in the SoundDock or iPod Hi-fi league. Without the bass part attached the music is not terribly engaging from all areas of the room, but on a desktop close to your ears it does a good job. It will strain to power a party, but can easily brighten up the atmosphere. Docking with the bass instantly gives the unit that much needed bottom end, bringing out the melodious bass line of Cornell Campbell's *Press Along Natty*, among others.

The front speaker uses magnets at the top and a plastic tongue and grove at the base. It clips in and out with no fuss at all, though there's a very slight pause in the playback as you slot it home. It also detaches while playing nearly continuously, too. Inside the front speaker panel is a rechargeable lithium battery that's good for two hours, and a second empty battery slot for another battery, should you wish to buy this accessory. You also get a remote, which worked well for us and includes iPod controls in addition to the normal browsing buttons. With this, you can choose to shuffle the playlist – a feature you can't command with the buttons on the speaker alone.

The feature set is fine as far as it goes, but you don't get a video-out for sending movies to a screen while playing the audio through the speaker, and you don't get a USB sync port for docking with your Mac's *iTunes* library.

Gear4 often underwhelms us with its bargain-basement products, but the Duo is an impressive release from the company and, we hope, a sign of good things to come. Though we do suggest also previewing the speaker units from Altec Lansing at the same price point, along with the Tannoy i30.

James Ellerbeck

CONTACT INFO

Manufacturer Gear4
www.gear4.com
Latest price on TechRadar
www.techradar.com/379895

FOR AND AGAINST

- (+) Well built
- (+) Battery-powered detachable speaker
- (+) Records directly to an iPod or Mac
- (+) Surprisingly good sound quality
- (−) No Mac connection
- (−) No video-out

VERDICT

★★★★☆

"Not bad at all. Would make a welcome addition to any desktop, bedroom or kitchen."

FM TRANSMITTER

Griffin RoadTrip

£35 We test the new 2008 model with SmartScan

CONTACT INFO

Manufacturer Griffin
www.griffin.com
Latest price on TechRadar
www.techradar.com/380481

VERDICT

★★★★

"This will suit some cars a treat – depending on the position of the cigarette lighter."

For its 2008 range of FM transmitters, Griffin introduced SmartScan and more compact designs. We loved SmartScan when we first encountered it on the iTrip Auto. It's a one-button search tool that scans the airwaves for empty spaces and remembers the three best frequencies. You then select one of three presets and tune your radio to that frequency.

The only real difference between the RoadTrip and the iTrip Auto is the former has a flexible arm for docking the iPod; the iTrip Auto uses a long, loose cable. The arm is smaller on the 2008 RoadTrip than the 2007 model, but we found it tricky to use in our Nissan Micra – due to the position of the gear stick and cigarette lighter, it was an awkward fit. The technology is first class, so depending on the type of car you have, and the dimensions of the RoadTrip, it could be a better fit for your needs. Sound quality, signal strength and build were all great.

James Ellerbeck

FLASH DRIVE

Corsair 2GB Flash Padlock

£14 USB flash storage with a self-configured PIN

CONTACT INFO

Manufacturer Corsair
www.corsair.com
Latest price on TechRadar
www.techradar.com/380511

VERDICT

★★★★½

"Very useful, because it lets you lock away data behind your own PIN number."

The genius of this USB stick is that it carries a hardware lock, so you can protect data and use the stick on different Macs.

These are quite hard to find. You can get software that will secure data on removable drives, but that locks you into using the drive on a Mac that has the software installed. Corsair's Padlock is software-free: there's nothing to install. It has a keypad and some firmware that lets you configure a PIN number. You use the key symbol button, colour indicators and the number pad to set yourself up, and we suggest reading the guide pamphlet carefully because you only get 15 seconds after you start to finish entering the code.

The drive was easy to set up and worked well. It's so cheap that we can find little fault with it. The design is a bit clunky looking, but you're not buying this to look pretty, you're buying it to secure privacy.

James Ellerbeck

LAPTOP BAG

Mac FORMAT Choice

Brenthaven Metrolite Bag

£65 An excellent, lightweight bag for city life

CONTACT INFO

Manufacturer Brenthaven
www.brenthaven.com
Latest price on TechRadar
www.techradar.com/380554

VERDICT

★★★★★

"Well-designed, not too expensive, and a good size for the daily commute."

This an excellent bag for a 15-inch laptop. It has plenty of space for accessories and documents in addition to the main laptop compartment, which, typically for a Brenthaven bag, is well-padded and lined.

The front-facing pouch unzips to reveal multiple smaller compartments and pockets inside. There's a special pocket with cable hole for placing an iPod, and a see-through plastic cover for placing cards. On the reverse is a zip lock document pouch that will hold A4 documents.

The main compartment has stiffened areas all around, including the base and top, and two large strips of felt-lined stuffing that fold down over the laptop from above. The carry handles are great, and you can carry it by hand or with a (removable) shoulder strap.

Brenthaven puts a lot of thought into its products, and has nailed another good design with this Metrolite release.

James Ellerbeck

WEBCAM

Genius Eye 320

£17 Cheap webcam proves you get what you pay for

CONTACT INFO

Manufacturer Genius
www.geniusnet.co.uk
Latest price on TechRadar
www.techradar.com/380980

VERDICT

★★★½

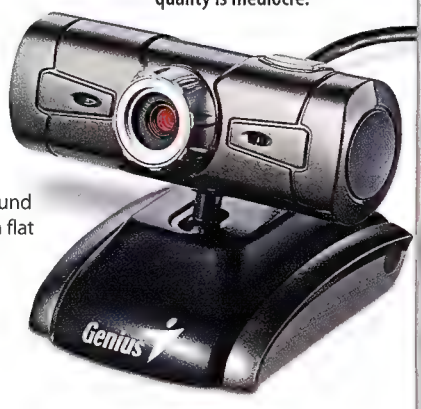
"Basic webcam functionality on a budget, but the image quality is mediocre."

Apple's laptops and iMacs might all include an iSight camera, but what if you want to add a webcam to a Mac that doesn't have one in the bezel? The good news is Mac OS X 10.4.9 introduced support for the USB Video Class (UVC) standard for use with *iChat*, so as long as a webcam supports UVC it will work as an *iChat* camera without drivers.

And sure enough, plug this in and it appears as a source for video in *iChat* or *Skype*. It has no built-in microphone; a boom mic headset is included, but it won't work with the Mac's line-level input port. Picture quality isn't stellar – colours lack saturation and details are soft – but it's not appalling. Focusing is manual, using a ring around the lens, and the camera will sit on a flat surface or hook onto a monitor.

It's cheap and does the job, but the Logitech QuickCam Pro for Notebooks is still our choice of external webcam.

Christopher Phin



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INTEGRATED OFFICE SUITE

OpenOffice.org 3.0 beta

£FREE At last, this open source office suite runs natively on Macs! But was it worth the wait?

CONTACT INFO

Developer OpenOffice.org
www.openoffice.org
Download URL
http://download.openoffice.org/3.0beta/

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

Intel Mac OS X 10.4 or later, 168MB free hard disk sapce

FOR AND AGAINST

- ⊕ Did we mention that it's free?
- ⊕ Powerful features
- ⊕ Runs natively on Intel Macs
- ⊖ Doesn't feel like a true Mac program
- ⊖ Lacks some useful small features
- ⊖ Doesn't run on PowerPC Macs

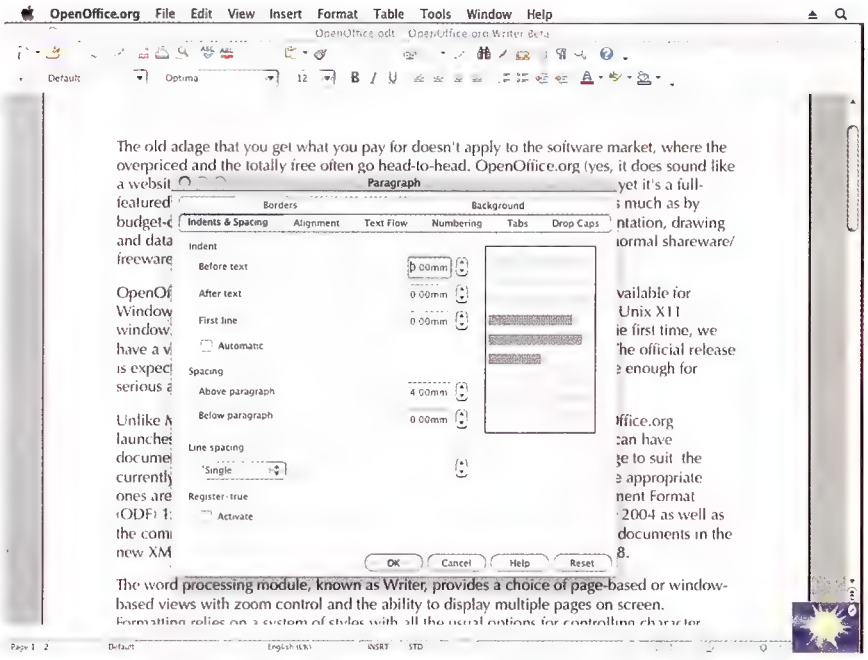
VERDICT

★★★★

"Powerful, capable and free, but this office suite still lacks some polish."

The old adage that you get what you pay for doesn't always apply to the software market, where the overpriced and the totally free often go head-to-head. *OpenOffice.org* won't cost you a penny, yet it's a full-featured office suite that aims to be taken seriously by big corporate users as much as by budget-conscious individuals. Offering word processing, spreadsheet, presentation, drawing and database modules, it displays a level of ambition that's way above what you'd normally expect from freeware.

This open source suite has been around and growing steadily for many years now, but so far it has only been available for Windows and Unix machines. Now, for the first time, we have a version that will run natively on the Mac (Intel-based models only). The official release is expected in September, but this beta version is stable enough for serious appraisal, if not yet for critical business use.



Writer provides all the usual paragraph, character and page formatting options you'd expect from a serious word processor.

All-in-one app

Unlike Microsoft *Office*, which is a bundle of separate apps, *OpenOffice.org* launches as a single app with all its modules contained in that. You can have documents of different types open simultaneously and the menus will change to suit the currently active window. Toolbars are held within each window, so the appropriate ones are always available. By default, *OpenOffice.org* saves in Open Document Format (ODF) 1.2, but can also handle *Office* binary formats up to *Office 2004* as well as the common generic formats such as RTF or CSV. It can open, but not save, documents in the new XML format that's used by *Office 2007* and *Office for Mac 2008*.

The word processing module, known as *Writer*, provides a choice of page-based or window-based views with the ability to display multiple pages on screen. Formatting relies on a system of styles with all the usual options for controlling character, paragraph and page properties. More advanced options such as indexing, bullet lists, footnotes, tables and columns are all supported. There are also facilities for revision tracking and for attaching notes to any point in a document. You can embed graphics, spreadsheet tables, text frames and other objects into a page and flow text around them. In addition, there's a built-in equation editor that enables you to insert mathematical formulas. Though not as heavily orientated towards layout as *iWork's Pages*, *Writer* does provide all the layout facilities you might reasonably expect from a word processor.

> "While there's no shortage of features in Writer, and they're well handled, it's the little things that are missing"

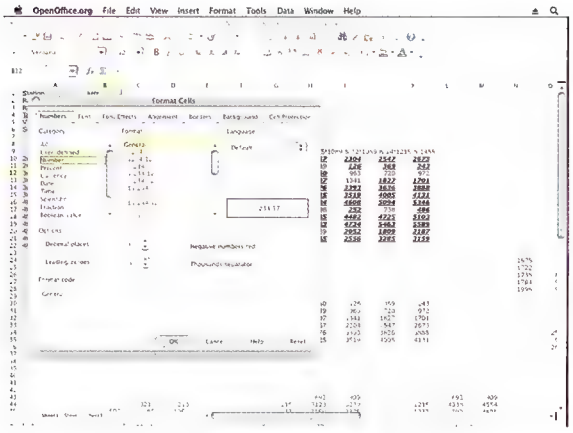
While there's no shortage of features in *Writer*, and they're mostly well handled, it's the little things that are missing. There's no equivalent, for example, of *Office's* Smart Cut & Paste, which will move text with a regard for the adjoining spaces and punctuation. Anyone who writes for publications will also miss the live word count. Having to open and close a dialog every time is so much slower.

Columns and rows

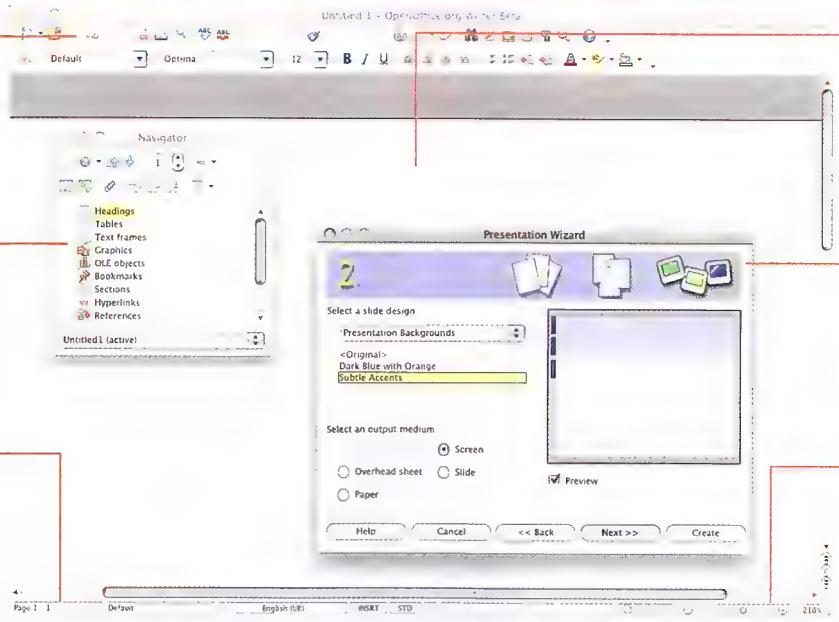
The spreadsheet module, *Calc*, is a bit more polished. The basic interface and way of working will feel entirely comfortable to *Excel* users and there's no shortage of spreadsheet real estate. Sheets can contain up to 1,024 columns by 65,536 rows, and you can have multiple sheets in a tabbed arrangement within one file. There are 371 functions available, including virtually all of those provided by *Excel*. A Function Wizard can help you build formulas and enables you to check the result of each component function as well as the overall formula.

Numerous formatting options are provided, including conditional formatting and a flexible system for defining custom formats. Like *Office*, *OpenOffice.org* has a Format Painter that copies formatting

A big spreadsheet area and good formatting control make *Calc* a viable competitor to *Excel*.



THE INTERFACE | Finding your way around OpenOffice.org



Toolbars
You can choose from up to 30 pre-defined toolbars per module. Each one can be customised to suit your needs or you can create your own toolbars from scratch.

Navigator
The **Navigator** palette enables you to jump to different parts of the active document. For example, to specific sections, tables, slides, worksheets and so on.

Status bar
This brings together status information, controls and results. Look here to see which page you're on in a *Writer* document or to find the sum of selected cells in *Calc*.

Main window
Some apps use lots of small floating palettes and windows. *OpenOffice.org* tends to keep everything within the document window so the relevant tools are there if you switch modules.

Wizards
Wizards are small windows that help with a specific task, such as setting up a presentation or converting a document type. When the job's done, they close.

Zoom
You can zoom in or out of your document by clicking in the status bar to open a dialog box. In addition, *Writer* has a slider control to make this easier.

attributes from a selected cell to any others. The charting options are also good with a wide range of the more commonly used chart types, though there's not as much flexibility as *Excel* offers.

Power users can create pivot tables and there's a Solver, which can drive a target cell to a maximum, minimum or specified value by altering other cells that it's dependent on. Unfortunately, this only works for linear equations, which does limit its usefulness. However, with *Office for Mac 2008* having dropped the excellent – and non-linear – Solver that it had before, *OpenOffice.org* currently has the upper hand here.

In principle, it should be possible to import worksheets in either direction between *OpenOffice.org* and *Excel*, but we always experienced problems ranging from the trivial to the terminal, such as whole sheets from an *Excel* workbook failing to load. Presumably this will be fixed with the official release.

Good Impress-ion?

For presentations, *OpenOffice.org* has its *Impress* module. This is a competent, if not groundbreaking, offering. It produces slides, notes and handouts and makes the whole job easier by providing a wizard to guide you through the initial setup. A sidebar in the main window provides easy access to layouts, transitions, animations and so on. For occasional use, *Impress* has almost everything you'll need. Its biggest weakness is that so few templates are provided, which means your presentations will either end up looking similar or will need considerably more work.

Base is the suite's database module, which takes a fairly traditional approach. However, it's a powerful and effective program. Joins can be set up between tables to create one-to-many relational links, with the related data being displayed in sub-forms within the body of a record form. There's a graphical interface for designing forms and wizards to help with setting up tables, queries and so on. Unlike the other modules, *Base* has an extensive set of templates.

Quick on the Draw

Finally, we come to *Draw*, the graphics module. Sensibly, this avoids getting involved in painterly effects or photo retouching and concentrates on the sort of diagrammatic work that's more likely to be of use in business. Simple flow charts, line drawings and symbols are its domain and it comes with all the tools you'll need for those.

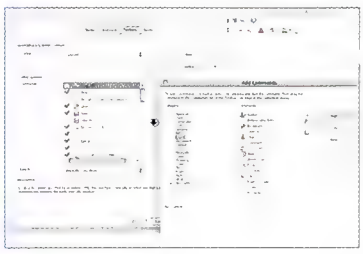
Overall, *OpenOffice.org* delivers a tremendous package of features at an unbeatable price. It's not quite up to *Office* level, but it's breathing down Microsoft's neck. One area where it does falter, however, is the poor attention to detail in the user interface. This may matter more to some users than to others. Fortunately, it will cost you nothing to find out how you feel about it.

Jack Weber

THE TOP THREE | OpenOffice.org's best bits

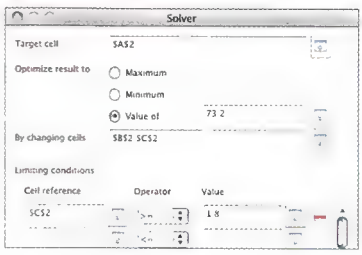
Customisable interface

The ability to customise toolbars, menus and keyboard shortcuts isn't new – Microsoft *Office* has long enabled users to do this – but it's well handled in *OpenOffice.org* and offers a lot of flexibility. Even though it doesn't feel convincingly like a real Mac program in other regards, this is one area of the suite where it does.



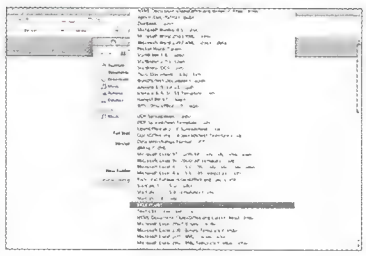
Solver

There's good and not-so-good here. Having a Solver tool is great, but having one that only solves linear formulas (with no square roots, trig functions and so on) is limiting. When Microsoft removed its Solver from *Excel for Mac 2008*, there was an outcry and it has promised to restore it in the next version. For now, this leaves *OpenOffice.org* ahead.



New formats

Although *OpenOffice.org* supports the ODF 1.2 open document format (and has promised to also support Microsoft's new OOXML open format in future), what's really impressive is the long list of other file formats it can read. There are 125 in this list, though unfortunately we didn't have a monitor big enough to show you them all.



AUDIO RECORDING AND EDITING APPLICATION

BIAS Peak LE 6

£64 Professional audio editing without the professional price tag

CONTACT INFO

Developer BIAS Inc
www.bias-inc.com
Latest price on TechRadar
www.techradar.com/380873

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

Any G4 or G5 PPC Mac, or any Intel Mac, OS X 10.4.3 or later

FOR AND AGAINST

- + Easy podcast publishing
- + Good support for plug-ins
- + Professional editing tools
- + Easy transfer to *iTunes*
- + Good value
- − Menus look unfinished

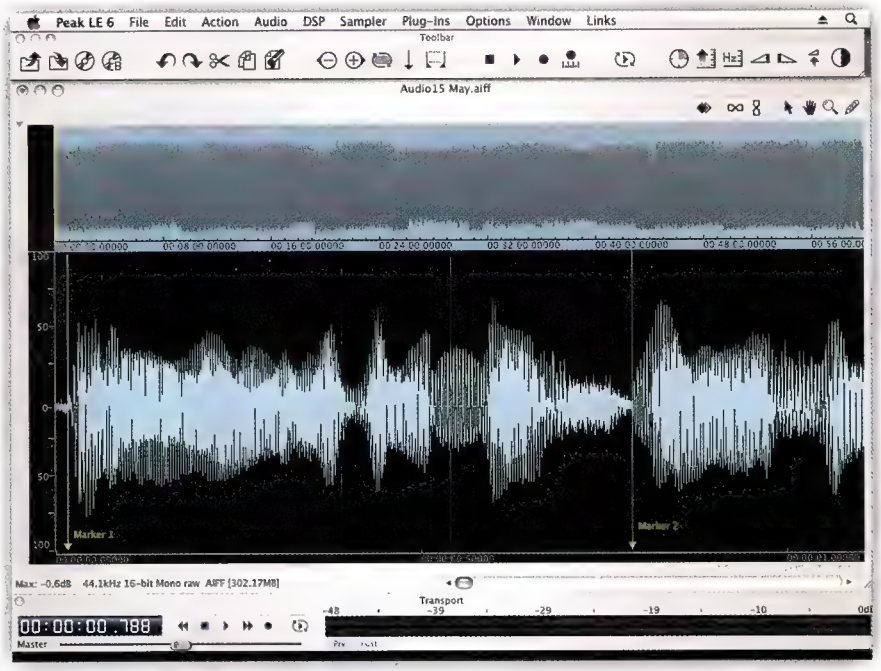
VERDICT

★★★★½

"Still hard to beat for audio editing, this latest version adds easy podcast publishing and iTunes integration."

The massive growth in computer-based music has seen multi-track recording move from high-end professional studios to affordable software that will run on any Mac. Which is great, but it has rather obscured the fact that stereo, or even mono, is often all that's needed. Whether you're transferring your vinyl and cassette collection to *iTunes*, creating a podcast or recording the soundtrack for your holiday video, the typical music recording program is likely to be overkill, and unnecessarily clumsy to use. In professional circles too, broadcasting, record mastering, voice-over recording and so on rarely need the full-blown multitrack music approach. One app that's been serving this pro market for many years is *Bias Peak Pro*, while its smaller sibling, *Bias Peak LE*, brings these abilities to home users.

Peak's default file format is AIFF, but it will handle a wide range including MP3, AAC (not Protected AAC), WAV, FLAC and others. Files may be mono, stereo or dual-mono, and that's it – two tracks max. You can record from any physical audio input including USB or FireWire devices. *Peak* can't directly capture streaming or system audio, but it does come bundled with a copy of *WireTap Pro* that can.



The main window shows an overview of the whole recording above a detailed view that can zoom in to the sample level.

In terms of recording, there are other cheap, or even free, applications that will do as good a job. Where *Peak LE* stands head-and-shoulders above them is in audio editing. With most applications you'd need to find your edit points by sight from the waveform or try to spot the correct point as the playback cursor whizzes through. Then it's trial and error until you get it just right. High-end professional editing programs – and *Peak LE* – do it differently. They offer dynamic audio scrub, which plays back a continuous short loop, typically about 50ms, as you drag the mouse cursor left or right. This enables you to find a specific note, an offending crackle or the start of a word with great speed and accuracy.

Having placed the edit correctly, you may still be left with an audible blip from the discontinuity. To smooth this out, *Peak LE* offers a **Blend** option. Or, for the ultimate precision, there's a **Pencil** tool, which enables you to redraw the waveform by hand. We found blending very effective for most edits and the pencil useful for removing sharp clicks and spikes. If the only editing you ever do is removing the silent gaps between tracks, then any audio editor will do the job. But for seamless editing of speech or music, techniques like these are a major benefit.

> "For the price, it offers good value and a sensibly cut-down version of the professional application"

Although the basic layout and operation of *Peak LE 6* are little changed from the previous version, the windows have been smartened up a bit and are now "magnetic" so they'll arrange themselves more neatly. The precision of the level meters has been improved and there's a new **Voiceover Ducking** option that will automatically reduce the level of existing tracks when any audio, such as a voiceover, is pasted onto it. Also new is the ability to create and upload podcasts from within the application without the need for any additional software. But if you're not into publishing podcasts, you may be more interested in *Peak LE*'s new ability to transfer tracks or playlists directly into *iTunes*.

Plug-ins are an essential feature of all serious audio apps. With that in mind, *Peak LE* supports Audio Units and VST plug-ins and comes with over 50 to get you started. You can record through plug-ins or use them to tweak an existing recording and then bounce the result back.

Rival apps such as *Sound Studio* and the free *Audacity* program offer alternative approaches that work well, but can't match *Peak LE*'s power. For the price, it offers good value and a sensibly cut-down version of the pro app.

Jack Weber

One of the most useful plug-ins provided is this excellent two-channel paragraphic equaliser.

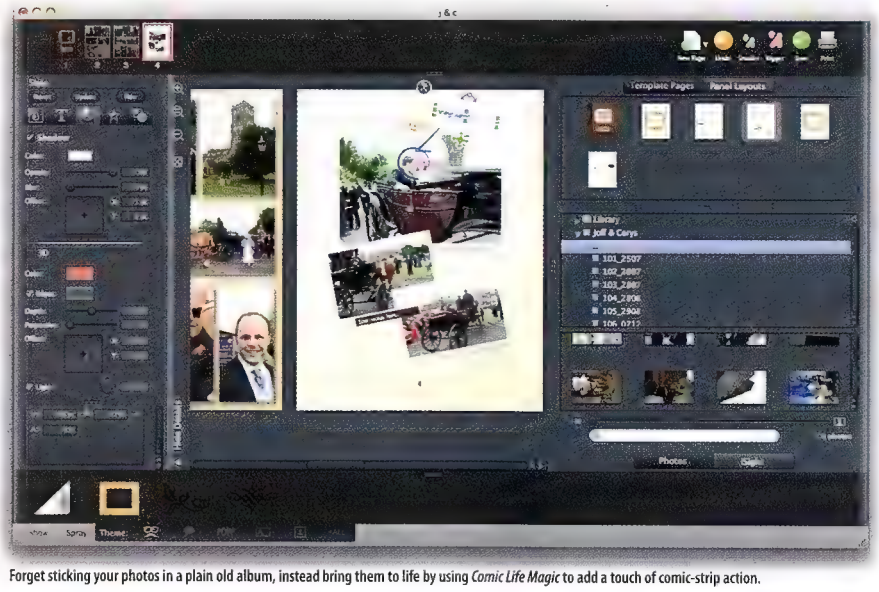
COMIC MAKER

Plasq Comic Life Magic

$40 (£20) Add some 'pow', 'zap' and 'wallop' to photo albums or storyboards

The loose-knit group of developers at Plasq produce simple 2D animation and graphics software, such as *Doozla*, the excellent kids' drawing tool that we reviewed in the last issue of the magazine and bestowed our *MacFormat* Choice award on.

Like *Doozla*, *Comic Life Magic* is also for 2D work, although *Comic Life Magic* is less about drawing and more about arranging pages of images together as stories. In *CLM* you choose images from your library or new ones taken in iSight and arrange them into comic strips, then add effects, speech bubbles and captions to bring life and a story to the pictures. It's a popular application that most fans use simply to have fun, but can also be put to work sketching out storyboards for more serious movie or print projects. The Plasq website shows off professional work done in the software by comic designers and even film makers, who used the previous version of *Comic Life*, *Comic Life Deluxe*, to plan film scenes.



Forget sticking your photos in a plain old album, instead bring them to life by using *Comic Life Magic* to add a touch of comic-strip action.

Core tools

New features in *Comic Life Magic* are mostly thanks to the intervening release by Apple of Leopard, with its **Core Animation** and **Core Image** tools. These 'Core' areas of Leopard are blocks of coding resources that software developers can interface with to add dynamic graphics features to their products. Plasq has leveraged these resources in *Comic Life Magic* to good effect, adding an entirely new floating effects palette (see the image to the right) containing a powerful range of new editing features, including things like being able to apply interesting warps and blurs to images, amongst several dozen other filters.

A highly intuitive vector-cutting tool has been included too, which enables an editor to roughly circle a figure or element to cut from an image, and then automatically gauges where the edges of that figure are placed. It works well even on non-uniform backgrounds without using the 'greenscreen' feature, so you can quickly cut out Granny from a photo shot in the Grand Canyon and have her imposed on a Amazonian background, which should sufficiently confuse her!

"Plasq has added a new floating effects palette containing a powerful range of new features"

We don't have any pressing need to create comics or storyboards, and imagine it will hold niche appeal on that score, but we found it very useful for creating dynamic photo albums. We took a few hundred shots from a wedding and laid them out in *Comic Life Magic*, adding captions and speech bubbles as we went along. Then, using the one-click output options, popped the results on our .Mac account. *iPhoto* and *Aperture* can both do the same kind of thing but lack the funky comic templates and comic-like effects, which are great fun and a novel way to document holidays and special occasions. We especially liked the Japanese manga-style themes, which seemed very fresh to our eyes.

That's magic!

If you have *Comic Life Deluxe* and are thinking of upgrading, we recommend the new version. The new editing tools are one draw, but the new layout is a better place to work in, and has less of a childlike look and feel. Our only complaint with *Comic Life Magic* was a minor bug in the main interface, when we clicked the **Hide Details** tab, which slides the left-hand effect panel away to reveal the main layout in a bigger space. This produced a wonky layout change for us, where the editing panel remained superimposed on the main layout though with the commands de-natured.

A fully featured demo is available on the Plasq site and on your disc thsi month, and there are quite a few videos on the web about *Comic Life Magic*, mostly on Viddler but also on YouTube, including some from the Macworld 2008 show, which was where we first got wind of the update.

Comic Life Magic went on sale in June, and the price seems good to us. It's a fun application with good *iLife* and .Mac integration and if you already use it for your story-boarding we're sure you'll love the richer set of features in this new release, not least the expanded template selection.

James Ellerbeck

The new floating effects palette enables you to enhance your images with ease.

CONTACT INFO

Developer Plasq
www.plasq.com
Latest price on TechRadar
www.techradar.com/380687

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

Mac OS X 10.5+ (Leopard)

FOR AND AGAINST

- ➕ Better layout than before
- ➕ More powerful, professional feel
- ➕ Rich new editing features
- ➕ Close *iLife* and .Mac integration
- ➕ Adds fun to creating photo albums
- ➖ Minor bugs found

VERDICT

★★★★

"Comic Life seems to be taking on a more professional lease of life in this 'Magic' version, but has kept its fun appeal."

PDF MANIPULATOR AND EDITOR

SintraWorks PDFClerk Pro 3.1

€35 (£28); upgrade €15 (£12) Sitting halfway between Preview and Acrobat, this PDF manipulation tool excels

CONTACT INFO

Developer SintraWorks
www.sintraworks.com
Latest price on TechRadar
www.techradar.com/380778

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

Mac OS X 10.5

FOR AND AGAINST

- ⊕ Easy to get to grips with
- ⊕ Plentiful export options
- ⊕ Numerous annotation tools
- ⊕ Excellent imposition features
- ⊕ Straightforward user guide
- ⊖ Some awkward interface components

VERDICT

★★★★★

"PDF manipulation for the rest of us, at an excellent price-point, and with a strong feature set."

With PDF becoming near-ubiquitous, demand is steadily increasing for applications that can edit the format, rather than just read it. Adobe's heavyweight *Acrobat* is often the application of choice, but with even the cheapest version costing nearly £300, affordable alternatives are welcome. *PDFClerk* (now *Pro* as of version 3.0) costs a fraction of the price of Adobe's giant, and includes much of the functionality.

Right from the off, *PDFClerk* feels very Mac-like. Like version 2, it's not going to win any beauty contests, but the icons have been given a lick of paint, and the various interface components are clear. As a straight PDF viewer, *PDFClerk* works very nicely, enabling you to simultaneously view thumbnails, the main page view and a document's table of contents – this beats *Preview*, which forces you to choose between thumbnails and the table of contents.

PDFClerk is a first-rate reader, editor and annotator for PDF files. It may not have the feature set of *Acrobat*, but it beats Apple's *Preview* app hands down.

Lots of options

For basic editing tasks, *PDFClerk* generally excels, too. Importing PDFs and other content is a cinch, and it's easy to rearrange and rotate pages. If you're mostly concerned with using *PDFClerk* to edit existing content for print, there's a wide range of options, including a decent selection of imposition templates, which can be added to via the Impositions Editor. You also have control over registration and fold marks, along with tint bars, making *PDFClerk* suitable for outputting files for professional printing.

Digital export is also fully covered. Although a basic **Export PDF** button sits in the toolbar, advanced options are available via File > Export. You can explode documents into single PDFs or bitmap images, or split a PDF into even and odd pages – handy for printing digital manuals, without wasting paper. Resizing documents also works well via the Document Settings Editor. Taking A4 double-page spreads down to A5 for cheap printing is painless, as is converting PDFs between European and US paper sizes.

Editing aside, annotation is something for which PDF editors are often required. In this area, *PDFClerk* offers two types of annotation: dynamic and static. The latter are shapes and elements that are 'burned' directly into the PDF, and therefore aren't editable. Dynamic annotation conforms to the PDF format, which, in theory, means *PDFClerk* should play nice with *Acrobat*.

To test *PDFClerk*'s capabilities in this area, we passed a bunch of documents back and forth between *PDFClerk* and *Acrobat*, and this highlighted the weight of Adobe's application – *PDFClerk* felt considerably more responsive and 'snappier'.

However, some aspects of annotation in *PDFClerk* feel less than optimal. First, it's sometimes awkward placing notes and adding text to a free-text box; secondly, drawn items often show onscreen, but have a zero-width stroke in the **Inspector** palette – something that doesn't become apparent until the document is exported.

> "While PDFClerk can't quite match Acrobat's feature set, it's more than suitable for most users"

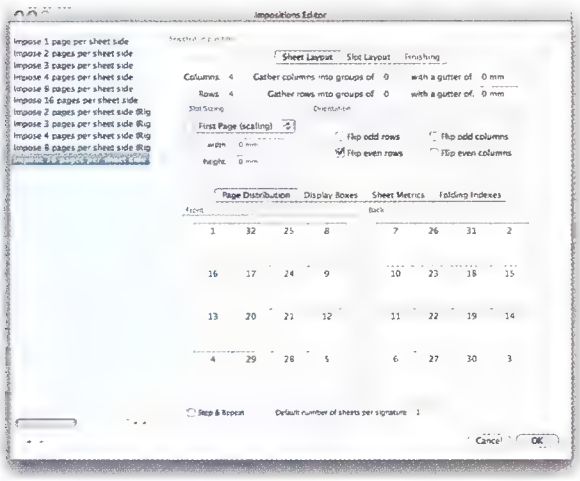
In comparison

Although it's fair to say a little of *PDFClerk*'s thunder was stolen by Leopard's revamped *Preview* (with its new-found abilities to merge and annotate PDFs), Apple's PDF viewer still doesn't offer the range of features of *PDFClerk*. And while *PDFClerk* can't match *Acrobat*'s feature set, it's more than suitable for most.

Therefore, despite minor misgivings about slightly clunky interface components, *PDFClerk* is well worth its shareware fee and a *MacFormat* Choice award. Here's hoping future updates keep up the high standard.

Craig Grannell

The Impositions Editor in *PDFClerk* is one of several tools that should appeal to anyone fine-tuning PDFs for print.



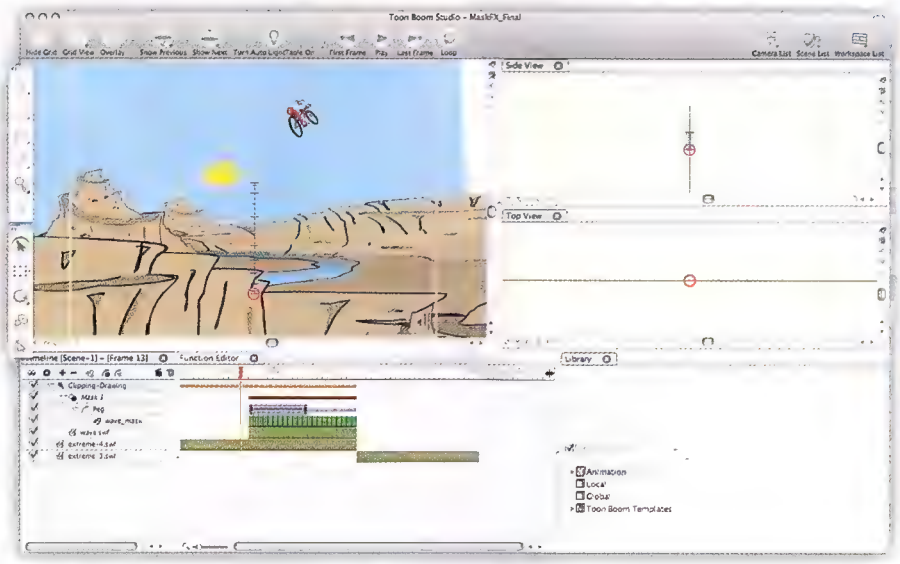
2D ANIMATION SOFTWARE

Toon Boom Studio 4

$349 (£177) Professional 2D animation with a great set of tools at a fantastic price

Toon Boom Studio 4 is a serious piece of software for those serious about animation. It's a tool that's going to take time to learn – so don't think you're going to master its principles and tools in a weekend. That said, when you do become familiar with the app, it rewards you with some excellent features and results. Workflow is key to creating an animation in *TBS*. And, it goes like this...

First you need to create your drawings. This can be done in *TBS* itself using its range of drawing features, including Bézier (called Polyline here) and Brush-based tools. New drawing tools in version 4 let you feather edges to create blurs and glows. The drawing tools are sound, but not as comprehensive as Adobe *Illustrator*. Option two is to import *Illustrator* files with layers intact (new to version 4 and seriously handy) or scan your artwork, clean it up (or trace it in *Illustrator*) and then import it. We suspect many seasoned animators will prefer the latter approach as it offers much more flexibility.



Toon Boom Studio 4 has some excellent new features, including the 3D Scene Planning tools that enable you to position your 2D elements in 3D space.

The Exposure Sheet

Next you'd create basic timings using the Exposure Sheet. The Exposure Sheet enables you to order drawings correctly and generally plan your animation. In the days before digital animation tools, an Exposure Sheet contained all the details of a specific scene – order of composition, timings, transitions and so on. They serve a similar purpose here, enabling you to manage all of your assets and make sure everything flows correctly from the offset. So, if you were animating a person, you'd draw all the separate elements (arms, legs, head, body and so on, grouping them into layers). Then you draw the different positions of those elements as necessary (repeating certain positions – you don't need to draw every single frame to create a convincing animation, as frames can be reused). Then you'd use the Exposure Sheet to place the different positions within cells (corresponding to frames on the Timeline) to create a rough animation. You'd also create your background/foreground images – and any other elements you'd like to feature in your animated scene. The idea is that you use the Exposure Sheet and Timeline in tandem, refining your animation and perfecting your timings (and using the Function Editor to fine-tune). You should have an Exposure Sheet/Timeline for each scene.

On the subject of scenes, *Toon Boom's* **Scene Planning** tools are superb. They enable you to plan your scene in a 3D space, using top and side views to correctly position your elements. This is useful when building up a multi-layered background with many trees, bushes and buildings. You don't have to worry about layer positioning; you can just drag your elements in front of, or behind, each other. Also, this method eliminates the need to simulate the effect of distance, and makes it easy to animate cameras to fly through your scene, and so on. Improved onion skinning (being able to see the previous and next frame as you work) is also a welcome addition in version 4.

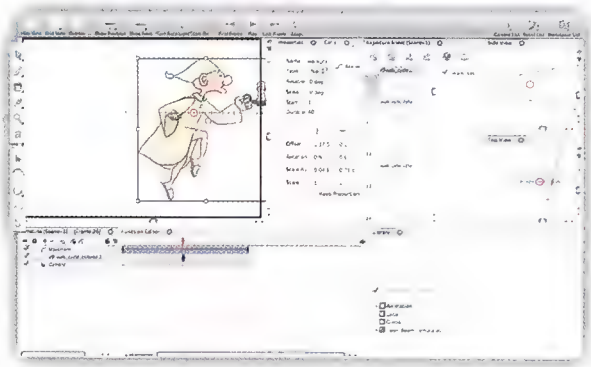
To make your characters move throughout your scene, you use pegs. These take their name from a traditional animation tool used to register all frames of, say, a walk cycle as the character moves – so the arms, legs, head, etc, don't get left behind or slip out of position. Pegs in *TBS* work in a similar fashion, acting as a kind of container for your separate animated elements in a scene. So, for a walk cycle, you'd set up a character, animate his limbs so they are moving correctly, and then use the peg to create the motion path. You also use pegs to animate individual elements within an animation (an arm moving, for instance).

> "When you become familiar with Toon Boom Studio, it rewards you with excellent features and results"

Lip-syncing tools

There are fantastic lip-syncing tools that automatically analyse sound files, enabling you to quickly set up the right phonemes for your characters, and there are some great tools for chopping up and animating pre-drawn characters. Finally, excellent export features, including *Flash* pre-loaders and the ability to embed your movie in an HTML file (as well as export directly to *Flash, QuickTime DV Stream* or image sequence), make for not a massively feature-laden upgrade, but a very impressive app, nonetheless.

Robert Carney



Using *Toon Boom's* Exposure Sheet in combination with the Timeline, it's very easy to set up walk cycles.

CONTACT INFO

Developer Toon Boom Technologies
www.toonboomstudio.com
Latest price on TechRadar
www.techradar.com/380829

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

Power Mac G5 or Intel Core, 512MB RAM, Mac OS X 10.4.7 or 10.5, 120MB free hard disk space, Wacom tablet recommended

FOR AND AGAINST

- ⊕ Excellent animation tools
- ⊕ Fantastic scene planning features
- ⊕ Made by animators, for animators
- ⊕ *Express* version perfect for new animators
- ⊕ Slick interface
- ⊖ Steep learning curve

VERDICT

★★★★

"Unless you're dedicated to creating an animated project, TBS may be too much. If you just want to dabble, check out the Express version."

RSS READER

Acrylic Software Times

$30 (£15) Intimidated by RSS? Times' personalised newspaper approach could convert you

CONTACT INFO

Developer Acrylic Software
www.acrylicapps.com
Latest price on TechRadar
www.techradar.com/380935

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

Mac OS X 10.5

FOR AND AGAINST

- + Personalised newspaper paradigm
- + Pretty interface
- + Easy to use
- + Shelf lets you save stories for later
- − Early releases prone to crashing
- − Some odd feed behaviour

VERDICT

★★★★

"We love Times' innovative approach to RSS reading; subsequent releases of this app should be better."

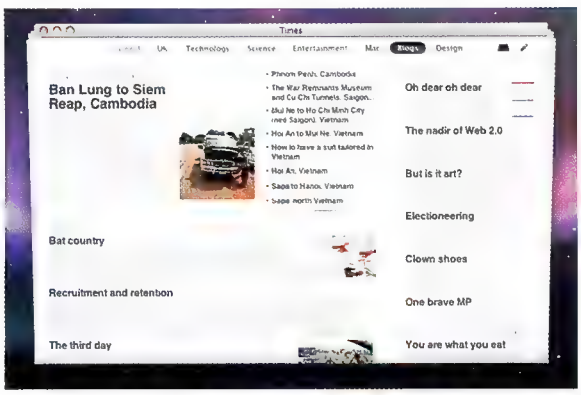
RSS feeds, those stripped-down, content-only feeds published by many sites, have changed the way many of us interact with the internet. Rather than visiting dozens of sites a day to see if there's anything new, RSS readers pull down all the stories into one window and mark the new stuff.

However, you might not want to read every story published by the Mac news sites in your reader, and because some sites still choose not to publish the entire story in their feeds, you will find yourself reading at least some stories in a browser anyway.

Times aims to change this. Its styling and name prompt us to describe it as a personalised newspaper, and it's actually a pretty apt label. You subscribe to feeds (by punching in a URL and letting the app discover feeds, by picking them up from your bookmarks or by OPML import) and arrange them into pages. You can choose to be notified when new items appear in feeds, or simply flick to *Times* and browse through the stories you've added. The interface splits each 'page' into three sections, all of which behave slightly differently. Though we'd welcome more flexibility, these layouts work well to differentiate content types. *Times* will even attempt to pull down the full story from the main site should the feed only contain a summary.

It's not perfect. Early releases proved prone to crashing, and it's patchy about feed parsing and persistency – but it's a refreshingly new way to consume the web. The personalised newspaper approach complements you-must-read-everything RSS readers such as *NetNewsWire* rather then supplanting them, and while we'll keep using *NetNewsWire* because of its syncing and iPhone view, *Times*' coffee-break style will ensure it stays in our Dock.

Christopher Phin



Click on any story and the font page will furl down to let you read the full article. In theory.

AUDIO RECORDER

TapeDeck 1.0

£15 A retro-syle audio recorder that takes you on a trip down memory lane

CONTACT INFO

Developer TapeDeck
www.tapedeckapp.com
Latest price on TechRadar
www.techradar.com/380904

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

Mac OS X 10. 5

FOR AND AGAINST

- + Simple interface
- + Reassuring clicks and noises
- + Clever uses of graphics and animation
- + Stable
- − Needs third-party help
- − You can record in *GarageBand* for free

VERDICT

★★★½

"A sentimental software release that apes the cassette recording experience of the good old days."

TapeDeck is a simple, animated audio recorder. It has an interface that looks like the tape recorder sitting in your attic next to that half-completed Rubik's Cube, and is just as easy to operate.

It records audio coming into your Mac from a headset, mic or line, and can also record any sound going through your Mac's sound card with the help of a free download called *SoundFlower* (**www.viddler.com/explore/liscio/videos/1**). The only drawback is that it doesn't record at the sound card level without this third-party help. The developers tell us they are working on this, but for the moment *SoundFlower* adds a layer of complication to the otherwise simple premise of *TapeDeck*.

TapeDeck is full of animation and audio effects that mimic the cassette recording experience – there are rotating tape wheels and plastic-sounding clunks when you click on a button. After you make a recording you can tag the 'tape' by 'writing' on the virtual tape sticker, plus you get the option to add more detailed descriptions. The tapes stack up in the right-hand 'tape box' for quick recovery. This is a Leopard-only release, and when you browse the files in *Finder* they appear as cassette tape icons, which is cool. *TapeDeck* also lets you copy cassettes to *iTunes*, or email them to your contacts with one click.

This app takes you back in time, it's stable, and it's simple to operate if all you want to do is record your voice or a line in. It doesn't do anything that your free copy of *GarageBand* can't do, but it's easier to use and a lot more fun. The learning curve will please newcomers, as it doesn't really have one if you've ever made a recording with a cassette tape! Our only complaint is the inability to record online sources out of the box.

James Ellerbeck

This audio recorder should appeal to all levels of Mac user, regardless of their technical ability.

Sold out!

ISSUE 190 January 2008

Speed up your Mac
20 great reasons to *love* Leopard
All the news from MacExpo Live
Use Time Machine
Fix images in *iPhoto*
Troubleshoot your Mac
Six video encoders rated

On the DVD
Geekbench 1.00: Test your Mac's spec
Panoweaver 3.0.1 Pro: Photo stitcher
PhotoScore MIDI Lite: Edit sheet music
Plus: Spanish lessons, demos & more

Sold out!

ISSUE 191 February 2008

iLife superstar
One month with the iPhone
A look back at Apple's font history
Improve the OS X Desktop
Avoid spam and viruses
Do more in *Automator*
Six speaker sets put to the test

On the DVD
PhotoPresenter 2.9: Movie slideshows
Sketsa SVG Editor 2.1: Illustrate easily
ConceptDraw Project 3: Organise work
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Shareware

MacFormat's shareware guru, Craig Grannell, takes a look at this month's new releases

Find the reviewed shareware titles on the DVD

SNIPPETS

Search me

If you're a big fan of *Safari*, chances are you've checked out *Inquisitor* (www.inquisitorx.com) at some point. We reviewed this incremental search add-on (Spotlight meets the Google search field) in issue 183 and liked it so much we gave it a *MacFormat* Choice award. Yahoo!, it seems, has gone a step further, doing a Victor Kiam and snapping up the app itself. It remains to be seen how the search giant's input will affect the shareware gem, however.

It's unsane!

Once it was the king of the Mac OS X add-on, but then it seemingly got kicked in the nuts by Leopard. Now, however, Unsanity (www.unsanity.com), maker of *Menu Master*, *FontCard* and *WindowShade*, has started rolling out beta versions of many of the company's popular add-ons. As always with beta products, back up before installing – word on the web is that the current releases are a tad rickety.

SHAREWARE OF THE MONTH

Dejumble 1.1.0

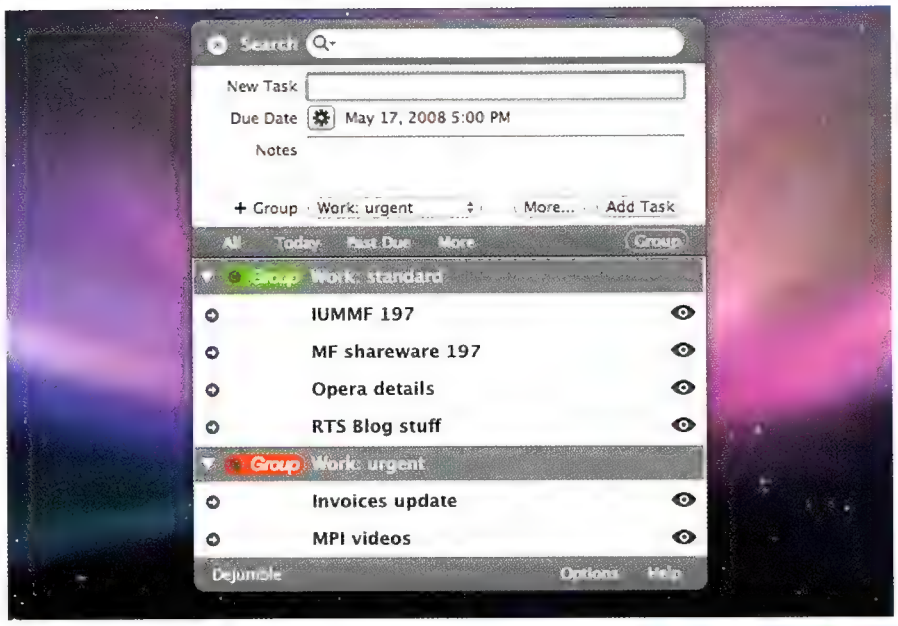
$19 (£10) Get things done with this Spotlight-like task manager

There are so many Get Things Done blogs and applications out there, but we wonder whether people spend so much time worrying about how to get things done, and working with applications to help get things done, that they don't actually *get* anything done!

Many task managers are overly complex or too rigidly simple, but *Dejumble* appears to get the balance right, borrowing from Spotlight and also the best of its rivals, making task-list creation and task-grouping straightforward and efficient.

Dejumble's first major plus is in being menu-bar-based, which means it's always accessible, regardless of which space you're in. Click the menu-bar item and *Dejumble* appears, and if you're not happy with its location, *Dejumble*'s window can easily be torn off and positioned elsewhere onscreen.

Adding tasks is child's play via the slightly busy but straightforward interface. Like any good task manager, *Dejumble* enables you to create groups, and an integrated search field hones down your list, in a manner akin to Spotlight. Usefully, the list itself can also be reordered via several time-based criteria, and you can toggle whether items are displayed by groups or as a flat list.



"Like any good task-manager, this one enables you to create groups, and a search field hones down your list"

Dejumble has another trick up its sleeve too, and this is providing synchronisation with *iCal*, and although it's somewhat early days for this feature, it still works reasonably well. Calendar events and to-dos are a breeze to bring across, and *Dejumble* events can also be sent to *iCal*'s to-do list, although, sadly, not its calendar. Deleting an item from either application doesn't necessarily reflect this change in the other, which is a minor shortcoming, although status changes are updated.

Check out our tutorial on page 60 for more on *Dejumble*.

CONTACT INFO

Developer Thinking Code Software Inc.
www.dejumble.com
Vendor Thinking Code Software Inc.
www.dejumble.com

VERDICT

★★★★

"Somewhat quirky and a little unpolished, but efficient and flexible enough for most users."

MoveCM 1.0.7

£DONATION www.limit-point.com/utilities/movecm.html

We don't often review contextual menu items, especially since Leopard ghettoised additions to *Finder*'s contextual menu, grouping them under 'More', but for *MoveCM* we'll make an exception because it's astonishingly useful.

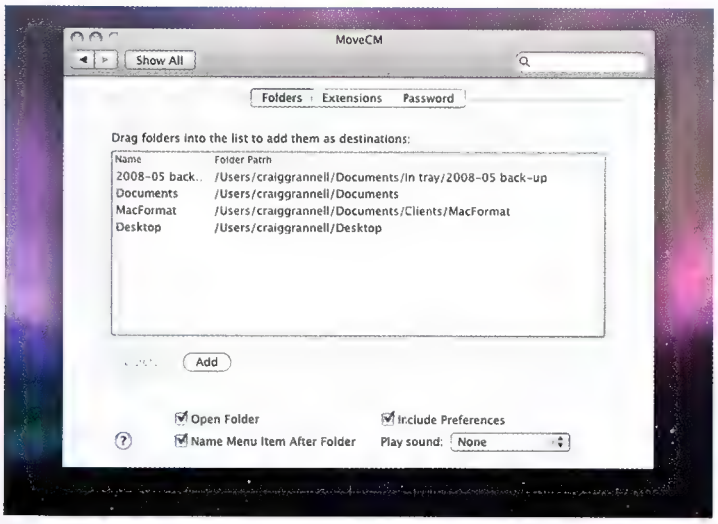
The basic premise behind it is in enabling you to rapidly move, copy, archive or alias a selection in *Finder* to a folder from a list defined via *MoveCM*'s preferences (although there's also an option to add/remove a selected folder in *Finder* to the destination list). It's also possible to associate extensions with folders, which adds a **Put in Place** option to move selected items fast.

When it comes down to use, *MoveCM* is pretty much flawless, and the author's donationware policy means spending a few quid unlocks dozens of other specialised utilities.

VERDICT

★★★★★

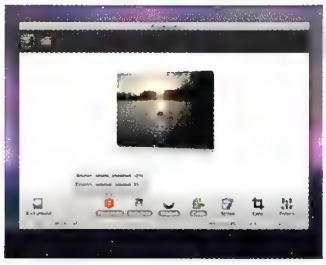
"Borderline essential and great value: you set your own price and get free updates."



Picturesque 2.0

$35 (£18) www.acqualia.com/picturesque/

The second major release of this application uses Core Animation to power its graphics engine, and enables you to 'beautify' images by adding reflections, curved edges, strokes, shadows and perspective effects. The new features, including cropping and improved batch resizing, are welcome, but some aspects of the interface are a step back – the application in use is often terribly slow, and setting options within pop-ups instead of version 1's single inspector actually makes *Picturesque 2.0* less usable.



VERDICT

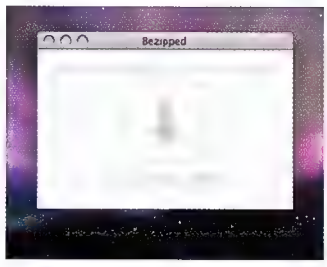
★★½

"A disappointing upgrade, but this app is still good at what it does."

Bezipped 1.0

£FREE www.fruitstandsoftware.com/bezipped/

File compression remains essential with people flinging files everywhere via email. *Bezipped* aims to better Mac OS X's built-in compressor in important areas: it creates Windows-friendly archives, ditching invisible files; it has Growl notification, notifying when it's done archiving; and you can choose where archives end up. On the negative side, it takes longer than *Finder* to archive large collections, and the bzip2 file format (with .tbz extension) might leave some recipients rather flummoxed.



VERDICT

★★★½

"Does its job well, but it's sometimes slow. A .zip option would be nice."

Camino 1.6

£FREE www.caminobrowser.org

Like *Safari*, *Camino*'s evolution has been painfully slow. Version 1.6 brings with it some important new features – an improved toolbar search, streamlined **Find** toolbar, better tabbed browsing, and integration with Mac OS X's spell-checker – but offers no compelling reasons to switch to it, bar, perhaps, the fantastic ad-blocking features, which are way ahead of *Safari*'s. If only this browser had more of *Firefox*'s extensibility and customisation options. As it is, *Camino*'s still behind the pack.

VERDICT

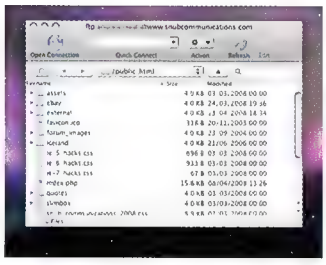
★★★

"First-rate ad-blocking, but lacking in features and extensibility."

Cyberduck 3.0

£FREE www.cyberduck.ch

Now in its third major revision, this FTP/SFTP client offers WebDAV and Amazon S3 support, along with Quick Look previews of remote files, and the ability to open the corresponding URL of a selected file in a browser. It also retains excellent ideas, such as restricting download/upload rates. It all sounds positive up to this point, which makes it a real shame that *Cyberduck* is still a bit buggy, and it also hasn't gained a dual-pane interface – otherwise it would finally rival *Transmit*.



VERDICT

★★★½

"The third version of Cyberduck is good, but it's not Transmit good."

SCENE
SAMSUNG
Nikon
COOLPIX S210

SUB-£150 DIGITAL CAMERAS

Savvy snappers

Words Christopher Phin **Photography** Philip Sowels, Neil Godwin

Can you get a brilliant camera for less than £150? We put six through their paces to find out

Any fool can spend £300 on a digital camera and come away with something that's capable of taking shots that would make Louis Daguerre weep with joy, but it takes a bit more savvy to spend less than half that amount without ending up with something that feels like it came out of a Christmas cracker.

Luckily, *MacFormat* has savvy by the spade load, so we've gathered together six cameras from the biggest manufacturers – all of which can be bought from reputable dealers online for less than £150 – and submitted them to a barrage of tests to work out which is the best.

All the cameras in this Group Test have a resolution sufficient to produce A3 prints at anything from reasonable to very good quality, so 6x4-inch snaps will be a doddle. Though most also include some sort of proprietary import, management and editing app that runs on the Mac, we're not going to waste time talking about these; all the cameras work with *iPhoto*, so that's good enough for us. On with our tests! ▶

> "Any fool can spend £300 and come away with a superb camera, but it takes savvy to do the same with £150"

ON TEST

Canon PowerShot A590 IS £116

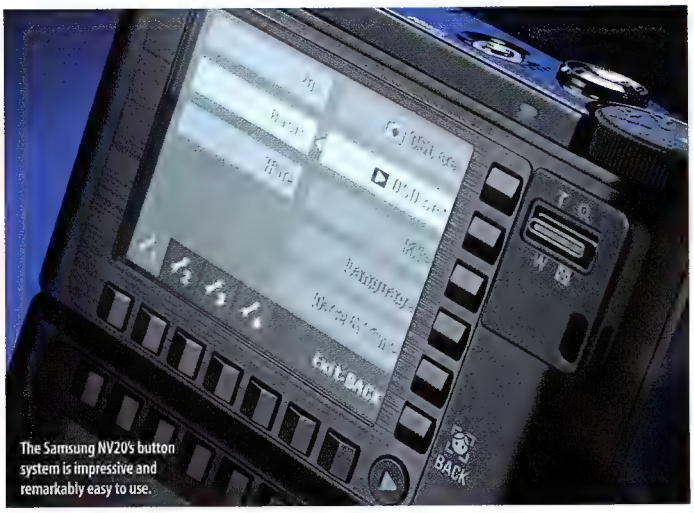
Fujifilm FinePix F50fd £138

Nikon Coolpix S210 £119

Pentax Optio M50 £132

Samsung NV20 £119

Sony Cyber-shot DSC-W120 £126



The Samsung NV20's button system is impressive and remarkably easy to use.

TEST ONE

Design

First, we assess the look and feel of each camera

With the exception of the model from Canon, all these cameras are very svelte and can slip easily into a pocket; the Nikon Coolpix S210 is particularly skinny. The Canon uses two AA batteries, which is a divisive move; although you can handily buy disposables anywhere, without investing in rechargeables it's a wasteful system. It's less bulky than the four-battery system of its predecessors, but still means that the PowerShot's handgrip feels chunky after handling the others. This is still a very compact camera, however, and it's comfortable to hold.

The models from Canon, Fujifilm, Nikon and Sony all look and feel similar – a metal or metal-effect body with a screen on the back. (Only the Canon and Sony models have an optical viewfinder, which is a shame.)

The stand-out model is Samsung's NV20. The black case looks slick and professional, but the real innovation is at the back. It eschews the usual four-way D-pad with a central confirm button in favour of a system of buttons lining two sides of the screen; you can rub your fingers along these to highlight different options, then press one to select. Excellent.

RESULTS	
Canon	★★★☆
Fujifilm	★★★★
Nikon	★★★★
Pentax	★★★½
Samsung	★★★★
Sony	★★★★

TEST TWO

Specification

What features do you get for your money?

When it comes to raw numbers, Sony's Cyber-shot fares badly. It has the lowest pixel resolution at 7.2 megapixels, and its 128mm zoom isn't stand-out. Its measly 15MB of internal storage can only store five best-quality pictures, and Sony's insistence on its Memory Stick format means that adding more is going to be pricey and limited to later reuse by Sony products only.

The Samsung NV20 wins the megapixel race – with 0.1 megapixels more than the 12-megapixel Fujifilm – and both higher-res cameras do have slightly larger sensors to compensate for the greater pixel density.

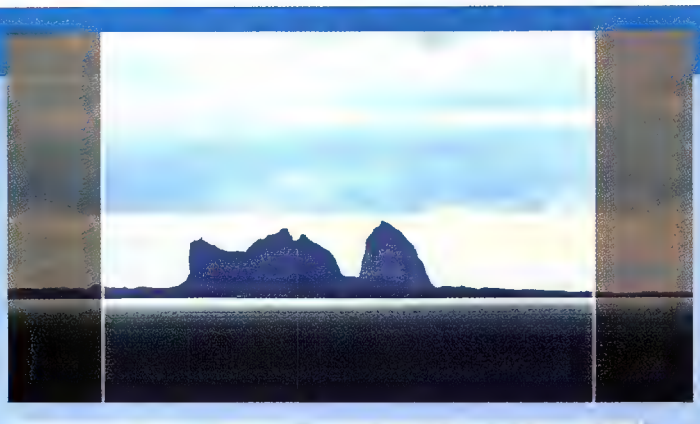
Otherwise, specs are largely the same across the board; screen sizes, physical dimensions and optical zoom are all broadly similar. The one model that seems to offer the worst combination of features is Nikon's Coolpix S210. It's one of two models here without image stabilisation, its optical zoom is limited to 3x, it has the longest minimum focus distance, and its aperture range starts at just f/3.1.

There's no one camera we can point to as being the best-specced model, however. All have their pros and cons; the Pentax, for example, has a long zoom but a slow lens at f/3.5.

RESULTS	
Canon	★★★★☆
Fujifilm	★★★★☆
Nikon	★★☆☆☆
Pentax	★★★☆☆
Samsung	★★★☆☆
Sony	★★½☆☆

If you're judging a camera by raw numbers alone, the Sony Cyber-shot DSC-W120 fails to stand out.

SIZING EXPLAINED | Aspect ratios



The Nikon Coolpix S210 makes use of a contextual menu help system, which is simplicity itself.

TEST THREE

Ease of use

None of these are hard to use, but which is intuitive?

You'd think that 'auto' was as easy as it got, but you'd be wrong. Both Canon and Pentax have implemented a kind of dummies mode on the models on test; these remove all the options from the screen so that you're not confused by talk of resolution and metering. Their usefulness is limited – we don't necessarily agree with the settings these modes pick – but they do make the cameras straightforward to use.

In fact, the Canon gets our vote for the easiest to use of the bunch. It's true that its menu system is initially perplexing, but a little time spent on learning your way around makes a huge difference later. We love the fact that the shooting modes are easily accessible from a physical dial rather than from a menu – something the Nikon, Pentax and Samsung models are guilty of – and appreciate the physical shoot/play switch too. The buttons are easy to press.

Nikon deserves an honourable mention for the S210's menu system, which is supported by a contextual menu help system. The joker in the pack is Samsung's NV20. Ultimately, its innovative system of touch-sensitive buttons is inspired, but it's intimidating when you begin.

RESULTS	
Canon	★★★★★
Fujifilm	★★★★☆
Nikon	★★★★☆
Pentax	★★★★☆
Samsung	★★★★☆
Sony	★★★½☆

TEST FOUR

Picture quality

We look at detail, contrast, dynamic range and more

Despite Canon's pedigree with digital cameras, the PowerShot A590 IS was one of the poorest performers when it came to picture quality. This model produced photos that didn't stand close scrutiny. Though the overall effect was always very good, there was a shocking softness and digital noise, particularly noticeable with areas of high contrast.

The Nikon Coolpix S210 was our other disappointment. The white balance was frequently tricked into producing overly warm images, there was too much purple fringing around areas of high contrast, and the macro forced us much further back from the subject than all the cameras apart from the model from Pentax.

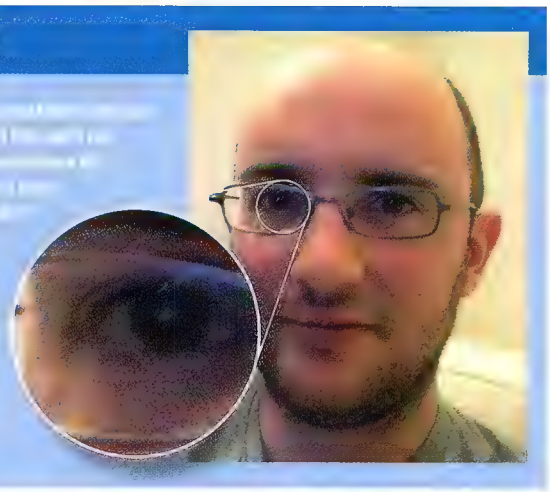
Despite the lacklustre macro performance, the Pentax was the best all-rounder. There was lots of dynamic range, and performance in dark areas was superb. Detail was good, but there was more softness than we'd like and it had a tendency to bleach out very fine detail in high-contrast areas.

The Fujifilm FinePix F50fd produced crisp results, sometimes at the expense of over-sharpening, and the Sony occasionally traded fidelity for a pleasing image. Neither is good or bad; it depends on what you want.

RESULTS	
Canon	★★★½☆
Fujifilm	★★★★☆
Nikon	★★½☆☆
Pentax	★★★★★
Samsung	★★★★☆
Sony	★★★★☆

The Pentax Optio M50 did well across the board, with great detail and dynamic range.

DON'T BE FOOLED | The great megapixel swindle



Canon usually does a grand job with digital compacts, but the low-light shots were disappointing.

TEST FIVE

Low light

Performance in low light sorts the men from the boys

Since many of us will be using our cameras in places where the illumination is sub-optimal, such as in pubs or indoors on an overcast day, the ability to deal with limited light is absolutely vital.

The top model here was the Fujifilm FinePix F50fd. Printed at 6x4 inches, the shot was well balanced and didn't appear soft or out of focus. Even when inspected at 100%, we were impressed with the shot taken on full auto. True, there's lots of noise, and definition at this scale isn't stellar, but it's still surprisingly competent for a high-resolution camera at this price.

The model from Pentax did struggle a little here, despite producing the best pictures under normal lighting conditions, but at least when we switched on the flash it was one of only two cameras – the other being the Samsung NV20 – that didn't throw a harsh shadow onto the wall behind our subject.

The Canon disgraced itself again, producing a dark, murky image, and the model from Nikon displayed quite disgusting quantities of digital noise. The Sony Cyber-shot produced a shot that was too dark, but at least it was clean; a little digital darkroom work could brighten it up a treat.

RESULTS	
Canon	★★☆☆☆
Fujifilm	★★★★★
Nikon	★★☆☆☆
Pentax	★★★★½
Samsung	★★½☆☆
Sony	★★★☆☆

TEST SIX

Value for money

When it comes to cost, which offers a top-value deal?

There's only £22 between the cheapest and priciest models on test here, but which offers the most for its price tag?

The Canon disappointed us with its shots – which is as much to do with our high expectations of the brand as the quality of the photos – but it's still a great-value camera. It's the cheapest of the group and it's packed with great semi-pro features that you can choose to use as you become more confident in your photography.

Worst value is the Nikon camera. It's not feature-packed (no image stabilisation, an unexciting zoom) and produced mediocre photos.

The most expensive model here, the Fujifilm FinePix F50fd, is actually pretty good value. It has a large LCD on the rear, totes a 12-megapixel resolution without too much evidence of the kind of noisy pixel overflow you traditionally get with smaller cameras, and took cracking photos.

The only other camera worth noting is Sony's Cyber-shot DSC-W120. You wouldn't be disappointed if you bought it, but its spec is mediocre and it produces distinctly middle-of-the-road images compared to the shots taken by the Pentax Optio M50 and the Fujifilm FinePix F50d.

RESULTS	
Canon	★★★★½
Fujifilm	★★★★½
Nikon	★★☆☆☆
Pentax	★★★★☆
Samsung	★★★★☆
Sony	★★★½☆

The Fujifilm FinePix is the priciest of this group, but you won't be disappointed with the return.

AND THE WINNER IS | Fujifilm FinePix F50fd

FINAL VERDICT
★★★★★

SUB-£150 DIGITAL CAMERAS

Canon PowerShot A590 IS

★★★½

Fujifilm FinePix F50fd

★★★★★

Nikon Coolpix S210

★★

SPECIFICATIONS

Price including VAT	£116	£138	£119
Effective sensor resolution (megapixels)	8	12	8
Lens system 35mm equivalent	35–140mm, f/2.6–5.5	35–105mm, f/2.8–8	38–114mm, f/3.1–5.6
Sensor size (inch)	1/2.5	1/1.6	1/2.5
Optical/digital zoom	4x/4x	3x/8.2x	3x/4x
Minimum macro focus (mm)	50	70	100
Image stabilisation	Yes	Yes	No
Supplied memory/card type	32MB/SD, MMC, SDHC	25MB (internal)/xD, SD	52MB (internal)/SD, MMC, SDHC
ISO range	80–1,600	100–6,400	64–2,000
Optical viewfinder	Yes	No	No
Dimensions (mm)	94x65x41	93x59x23	90x55.5x18
Weight (g)	225	205	140

SUB-£150 DIGITAL CAMERAS

Pentax Optio M50

★★★★½

Samsung NV20

★★★★

Sony Cyber-shot DSC-W120

★★★

SPECIFICATIONS

Price including VAT	£132	£119	£126
Effective sensor resolution (megapixels)	8	12.1	7.2
Lens system 35mm equivalent	36–180mm, f/3.5–5.6	34–102mm, f/2.8–5.1	32–128mm, f/2.8–7.1
Sensor size (inch)	1/2.35	1/1.72	1/2.5
Optical/digital zoom	5x/5.1x	3x/5x	4x,2x
Minimum macro focus (mm)	100	40	4x,2x
Image stabilisation	No	Yes	Yes
Supplied memory/card type	51.1MB (internal)/SD, MMC, SDHC	20MB (internal)/SD, MMC, SDHC	15MB (internal)/Memory Stick Duo/Pro Duo
ISO range	64–6,400	80–3,200	100-3,200
Optical viewfinder	No	No	Yes
Dimensions (mm)	95x55x23.5	97x60x19	88x57x22
Weight (g)	130	166	154

Buyers' guide

Sponsored by techradar.com Deep into technology

How to buy a Mac

Not sure which Mac to buy? Follow our advice and make the right choice

WWDC came and went without any updates to the Mac range. The most recent change is still to the iMac. The top-end iMac now has a 3.06GHz processor, and all iMacs bar the 2.4GHz machine have 2GB RAM installed. We also have the rest of the Mac range to help you make the right choice before you buy. Plus, we have extended our buyers' guide to include the whole iPod family. Turn to page 112 if you're looking for a new iPod but not sure which one to buy.

DID YOU KNOW?

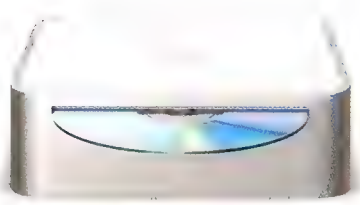
Making your mind up

All Macs come with at least Intel Core 2 Duo chips, which means that whichever Mac you choose you know it's going to be powerful. So now you need to choose between a laptop or desktop. If you work on the move then a laptop is best, but these do have small screens and fiddly keyboards. And they actually cost more than a lower-end desktop.

Laptop choice is between the MacBook Pro, MacBook and the new MacBook Air. The MacBook starts at £699 and is great for less intensive work, like using the *iLife* apps. The MacBook Pro, starting at £1,299, is for more processor-hungry work like video-editing or running 3D programs as they run at higher speeds and have a faster hard drive. The super-thin MacBook Air is ideally suited to a regular business traveller who takes advantage of wireless networking. There is no CD/DVD drive included, but an external SuperDrive can be bought for £65.

The MacBook Pro is available in two 15-inch configurations with either 2.4

"All Macs come with at least Intel Core 2 Duo chips, which means that whichever Mac you choose you know it will be powerful"



or 2.5GHz processors, and there's a 17-inch 2.5GHz version machine, too. And you can now upgrade the 2.5GHz Pros to 2.6GHz for an extra £160. The MacBook only comes with a 13-inch screen, as does the MacBook Air.

If a laptop isn't for you, you have the choice of a Mac mini, iMac or Mac Pro. If you're on a budget or desk space is limited, go for a Mac mini. For £399 you get a 1.83GHz machine with a Combo Drive, or a 2.0GHz mini with a SuperDrive for £499. You will need a monitor, keyboard and mouse.

The new iMac comes in four flavours: 20-inch 2.4GHz, 20-inch 2.66GHz, 24-inch 2.8GHz or 24-inch 3.06GHz, from £799. These all-in-ones now have the power to almost rival a Mac Pro, although for real intensive work you will need to buy Apple's high-end professional Mac. With a basic spec of one quad-core 2.8GHz Intel Xeon processor, there's nothing you can't throw at a Mac Pro. With numerous configuration options, you can be sure that the Mac you order is built to your exact requirements. Prices start from £1,429, but with the option of 32GB RAM upgrades and larger hard drives, you could spend an absolute fortune.

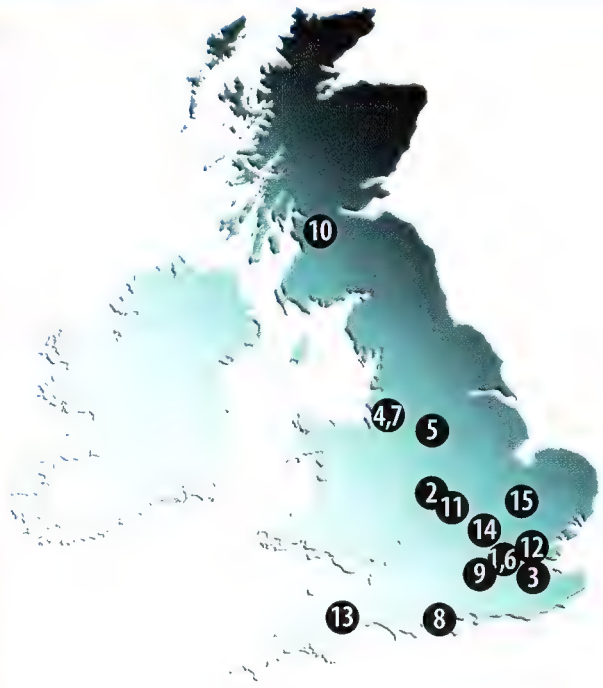
If you opt for a Mac mini or Mac Pro, you'll need a display, and Apple's Cinema Display from just £399 is far and away the best choice.

All Macs come with Mac OS X 10.5 Leopard and the *iLife '08* software, so you can organise photos, make and store music, build websites and create movies to burn to a DVD.

DID YOU KNOW?

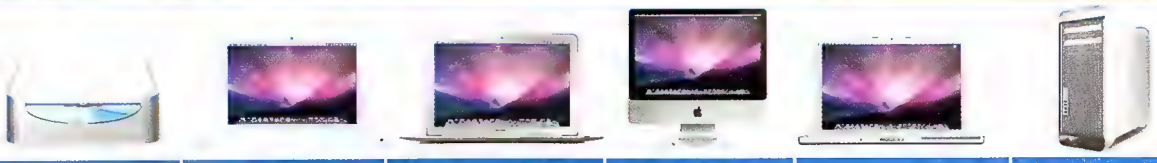
Apple's new iMac features a FireWire 800 port in addition to the FireWire 400. What more could you need?

APPLE STORES IN THE UK



1. **235 Regent Street**, London, 0207 153 9000
2. **Bullring Shopping Centre**, Birmingham, 0121 260 1900
3. **Bluewater Shopping Centre**, Greenhithe, Kent, 01322 640 100
4. **Trafford Centre**, Manchester, 0161 240 1000
5. **Meadowhall Shopping Centre**, Sheffield, 0114 212 1000
6. **Brent Cross**, London, 0208 359 1050
7. **Arndale Centre**, Manchester, 0161 216 4570
8. **WestQuay Shopping Centre**, Southampton, 023 8030 1050
9. **Bentall Centre**, Kingston Upon Thames, 0208 213 2020
10. **147 Buchanan Street**, Glasgow, 0141 300 4950
11. **147 Touchwood Centre**, Solihull, 0121 224 1300
12. **Lakeside Shopping Centre**, Grays, Essex, 0170 871 7500
13. **24 Princesshay**, Exeter, 0139 231 6600
14. **26 Midsummer Place**, Milton Keynes, 01908 856 650
15. **Grand Arcade**, Cambridge, 01223 253 600

BENCHMARKS | At the speed of Mac



	Mac mini	MacBook	MacBook Air	iMac	MacBook Pro	Mac Pro
Type tested	1.83GHz Core Duo 1GB RAM	13.3-inch 2.4GHz Core 2 Duo, 2GB RAM	1.6GHz Intel Core 2 Duo, 2GB RAM	20-inch 2.4GHz Core 2 Duo, 1GB RAM	15.4-inch 2.5GHz Core 2 Duo, 2GB RAM	2x 3GHz Intel Xeon, 2GB RAM
Start up	23 secs	24 secs	58.6 secs	27 secs	34 secs	23 secs
Shut down	12 secs	6 secs	5.7 secs	7.5 secs	5.8 secs	9 secs
iTunes encoding	55 secs	58 secs	1 min, 38 secs	49 secs	55 secs	47 secs
Photoshop radial blur	2 mins, 7 secs	1 min, 40 secs	2 mins, 54 secs	1 min, 43 secs	1 min, 35 secs	49 secs
Copy a 1GB folder	46 secs	54 secs	1 min, 26 secs	28.5 secs	49 secs	38 secs
Xbench (higher is better)	67	50.08	49.68	146	108	140.45

The CPU and Quartz Graphics test results were generated using *Xbench*. The *Photoshop* test involved applying a 100% radial blur to the same JPEG image on all three MacBooks. *Cinebench* is a widely used benchmarking application based on the powerful 3D rendering software *Cinema 4D*. Both *Cinebench* and *Xbench* can be downloaded from the internet for free. You need to purchase a serial key to unlock *Cinebench*'s 64-bit testing tools. Results may vary between equally specced computers depending on several factors, including wear and tear, installed software and the version of the OS installed.

Your choice of Apple gear

LET US HELP YOU MAKE THE RIGHT PURCHASE

iMac

Updated April 2008

20-inch 2.4GHz
£799

- 2.4GHz Intel Core 2 Duo
- 1GB memory
- 250GB hard drive
- 8x double-layer SuperDrive (DVD±R DL/DVD±RW/CD-RW)
- ATI Radeon HD 2400 XT with 128MB memory
- Built-in iSight video camera
- AirPort Extreme
- Bluetooth 2.0 + EDR
- Ships with Mac OS X Leopard, *iLife '08*, *Front Row*, *Photo Booth*, Mighty Mouse and keyboard, Apple Remote

+ Great value
− Bigger HD would be nice

20-inch 2.66GHz
£949

- 2.66GHz Intel Core 2 Duo
- 2GB memory
- 320GB hard drive
- 8x double-layer SuperDrive (DVD±R DL/DVD±RW/CD-RW)
- ATI Radeon HD 2600 PRO with 256MB memory
- Built-in iSight video camera
- AirPort Extreme
- Bluetooth 2.0 + EDR
- Ships with Mac OS X Leopard, *iLife '08*, *Front Row*, *Photo Booth*, Mighty Mouse and keyboard, Apple Remote

+ 2GB memory
− Wired mouse and keyboard

24-inch 2.8GHz
£1,149

- 2.8GHz Intel Core 2 Duo
- 2GB memory
- 320GB hard drive
- 8x double-layer SuperDrive (DVD±R DL/DVD±RW/CD-RW)
- ATI Radeon HD 2600 PRO with 256MB memory
- Built-in iSight video camera
- AirPort Extreme
- Bluetooth 2.0 + EDR
- Ships with Mac OS X Leopard, *iLife '08*, *Front Row*, *Photo Booth*, Mighty Mouse, keyboard & Apple Remote

+ Impressive specification
− £34 extra to go wireless

24-inch 3.06GHz
£1,389

- 3.06GHz Intel Core 2 Extreme
- 2GB memory
- 500GB hard drive
- 8x double-layer SuperDrive (DVD±R DL/DVD±RW/CD-RW)
- NVIDIA GeForce 8800 GS with 512MB memory
- Built-in iSight video camera
- AirPort Extreme
- Bluetooth 2.0 + EDR
- Ships with Mac OS X Leopard, *iLife '08*, *Front Row*, *Photo Booth*, Mighty Mouse, keyboard & Apple Remote

+ Fastest ever iMac
− Could spend loads upgrading

MacBook Pro

Updated February 2008

15-inch 2.4GHz
£1,299

- 15.4-inch TFT widescreen display
- 2.4GHz Intel Core 2 Duo 3MB shared L2 cache
- 2GB (two SO-DIMMs)
- 200GB, 5,400rpm Serial ATA
- 8x double-layer SuperDrive (DVD+R DL/DVD±RW/CD-RW)
- NVIDIA GeForce 8600M GT graphics card with 256MB SDRAM
- Built-in iSight, AirPort Extreme and Bluetooth 2.0, multi-touch trackpad
- OS X Leopard and Apple Remote

+ Multi-touch trackpad
− Screen too small for some

15-inch 2.5GHz
£1,599

- 15.4-inch TFT widescreen display
- 2.5GHz Intel Core 2 Duo 6MB shared L2 cache
- 2GB (two SO-DIMMs)
- 250GB, 5,400rpm Serial ATA
- 8x double-layer SuperDrive (DVD+R DL/DVD±RW/CD-RW)
- NVIDIA GeForce 8600M GT graphics card with 512MB SDRAM
- Built-in iSight, AirPort Extreme and Bluetooth 2.0, multi-touch trackpad
- OS X Leopard and Apple Remote

+ Lots of HD space
− Upgrade options could cost

17-inch 2.5GHz
£1,799

- 17-inch TFT widescreen display
- 2.5GHz Intel Core 2 Duo
- 6MB shared L2 cache
- 2GB (2x SODIMMs)
- 250GB 5,400rpm Serial ATA
- 8x double-layer SuperDrive (DVD+R DL/DVD±RW/CD-RW)
- NVIDIA GeForce 8600M GT graphics card with 512MB SDRAM
- Built-in iSight, AirPort Extreme and Bluetooth 2.0, multi-touch trackpad
- OS X Leopard and Apple Remote

+ Option to upgrade to 2.6GHz
− Puts a big dent in the wallet

One 2.8GHz Quad
£1,429
One 2.8GHz Quad-Core Intel Xeon
2GB (2x1GB) RAM
ATI Radeon HD 2600 XT 256MB GDDR3
320GB 7,200-rpm Serial ATA 3Gb/s
One 16x SuperDrive
Mac OS X Leopard
Apple Mighty Mouse
Apple Keyboard
Five USB ports
Two FireWire 400 ports
Two FireWire 800 ports
+ Great value for money
– Could spend loads upgrading

Two 2.8GHz Quad
£1,749
Two 2.8GHz Quad-Core Intel Xeon
2GB (2x1GB) RAM
ATI Radeon HD 2600 XT 256MB GDDR3
320GB 7,200-rpm Serial ATA 3Gb/s
One 16x SuperDrive
Mac OS X Leopard
Apple Mighty Mouse
Apple Keyboard
Five USB ports
Two FireWire 400 ports
Two FireWire 800 ports
+ Great configuration options
– Upgrade options tempting

Two 3GHz Quad
£2,249
Two 3.0GHz Quad-Core Intel Xeon
2GB (2x1GB) RAM
ATI Radeon HD 2600 XT 256MB GDDR3
320GB 7,200-rpm Serial ATA 3Gb/s
One 16x SuperDrive
Mac OS X Leopard
Apple Mighty Mouse
Apple Keyboard
Five USB ports
Two FireWire 400 ports
Two FireWire 800 ports
+ Two 3GHz Quad processors!
– Too many upgrade choices?

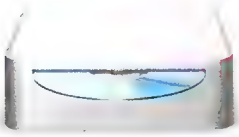
Two 3.2GHz Quad
£2,758.99
Two 3.2GHz Quad-Core Intel Xeon
2GB (2x1GB)
ATI Radeon HD 2600 XT 256MB GDDR3
320GB 7,200-rpm Serial ATA 3Gb/s
One 16x SuperDrive
Mac OS X Leopard
Apple Mighty Mouse
Apple Keyboard
Five USB ports
Two FireWire 400 ports
Two FireWire 800 ports
+ The fastest Mac ever
– Do you really need it?

Mac Pro

Updated January 2008

Mac mini

Updated August 2007



1.83GHz 80GB
£399
1.83GHz Intel Core 2 Duo
1GB memory
80GB hard drive
2MB shared L2 cache
Intel GMA 950 graphics processor with 64MB of DDR2 SDRAM
Combo drive (DVD-ROM/CD-RW)
AirPort Extreme
Bluetooth 2.0 + EDR
Ships with Mac OS X Leopard, *iLife '08*, Apple Remote and DVI to VGA adaptor
+ Excellent value for money
– Poor for 3D graphics

2.0GHz 120GB
£499
2.0GHz Intel Core 2 Duo
1GB memory
120GB hard drive
4MB shared L2 cache
Intel GMA 950 graphics processor with 64MB of DDR2 SDRAM
Double-layer SuperDrive (DVD+R DL/DVD±RW/CD-RW)
AirPort Extreme, Bluetooth 2.0 + EDR
Ships with Mac OS X Leopard, *iLife '08*, Apple Remote and DVI to VGA adaptor
+ More hard drive space
– Still not ideal for gamers

MacBook Air

Released January 2008

13-inch 1.6GHz
£1,199.01
1.6GHz Intel Core 2 Duo processor
2GB memory
80GB 4,200-rpm PATA hard drive
Built-in 802.11n WiFi and Bluetooth 2.1 + EDR
Mac OS X Leopard
1x USB 2.0 port
Backlit keyboard
Micro DVI port
MagSafe power adaptor
LED display
+ Thintastic!
– SuperDrive is an extra £65

13-inch 1.8GHz
£2,028
1.8GHz Intel Core 2 Duo processor
2GB memory
64GB solid-state drive
Built-in 802.11n WiFi and Bluetooth 2.1 + EDR
Mac OS X Leopard
1x USB 2.0 port
Backlit keyboard
Micro DVI port
MagSafe power adaptor
LED display
+ Looks stunning
– Expensive and needs extras

13-inch white 2.1GHz
£699
13.3-inch glossy TFT display
2.1GHz Intel Core 2 Duo
3MB shared L2 cache
1GB RAM (two SO-DIMMs)
120GB Serial ATA, 5,400rpm
24x Combo drive (DVD-ROM/CD-RW)
Intel GMA X3100 graphics processor with 144MB DDR2 SDRAM
Built-in iSight video camera, AirPort Extreme and Bluetooth 2.0
OS X Leopard and Apple Remote
+ Great value
– Could use more RAM

13-inch white 2.4GHz
£829
13.3-inch glossy TFT display
2.4GHz Intel Core 2 Duo
3MB shared L2 cache
2GB RAM (two SO-DIMMs)
160GB Serial ATA, 5,400rpm
8x double-layer SuperDrive (DVD+R DL/DVD±RW/CD-RW)
Intel GMA X3100 graphics processor with 144MB DDR2 SDRAM
Built-in iSight video camera, AirPort Extreme and Bluetooth 2.0
OS X Leopard and Apple Remote
+ More RAM and HD space
– No multi-touch trackpad

13-inch black 2.4GHz
£949
13.3-inch glossy TFT display
2.4GHz Intel Core 2 Duo
3MB shared L2 cache
2GB RAM (two SO-DIMMs)
250GB Serial ATA, 5,400rpm
8x double-layer SuperDrive (DVD+R DL/DVD±RW/CD-RW)
Intel GMA X3100 graphics processor with 144MB DDR2 SDRAM
Built-in iSight video camera, AirPort Extreme and Bluetooth 2.0
OS X Leopard and Apple Remote
+ Loads of HD space
– It's pricey in black

MacBook

Updated February 2008

"The best compromise is the iPod nano. The screen is too small to watch more than a music video, but it's crisp and the capacities are sufficient"

How to buy an iPod

The iPod family has never looked better; we help you find *your* ideal model

Which iPod you choose depends a lot on what kind of person you are; there is no 'best' model. If your music library is small – look at the bottom of your *iTunes* window when you're clicked on Library – you can probably get away with a cheaper device, but if you have a more generous collection you'll need to make some tough choices.

While most of us regularly listen to only a fraction of our music – something facilitated by the use of Playlists and Smart Playlists, and the iPod shuffle's Autofill – many prefer being able to carry their whole collection with them. If you have a large library, the only practical choice if you're one of the latter types is the iPod classic; it's the only iPod in Apple's current line-up to use a hard disk rather than flash-based storage, and while this does come at the expense of resilience – anecdotally at least, most iPod repairs are necessitated by a failed hard disk – you do get phenomenal bang for buck. The 160GB iPod classic is 22 times cheaper per gigabtye than the entry-level 1GB iPod shuffle.

Unlike the relatively heavy, hard disk-based iPod classic, however, the screenless iPod shuffle is a great gym companion, though remember that it is expensive for what you get.

The best compromise is the iPod nano. The screen is frankly too small to watch anything more than a music video or video podcast, but it's crisp and detailed, and the 4GB and 8GB capacities are sufficient for many.

The iPod touch is in another league altogether. Though expensive, it is fantastically capable, and the generous screen paired with Apple's innovative Multi-Touch gesture-based interface is a joy to use. It boasts WiFi, can browse the web and manage email. It can now run lots of third-party apps, too, thanks to the official software development kit that's just been launched. See the box opposite for a comparison with the iPhone.

DID YOU KNOW?
At the cost per gigabyte of the original 5GB iPod, today's 160GB iPod classic would have a £11k price tag.

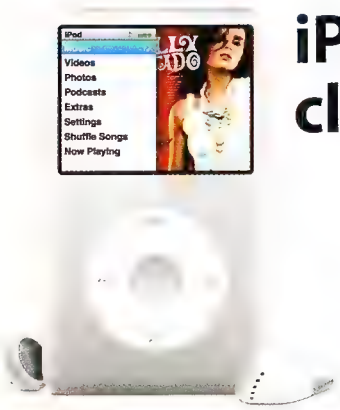
iPod touch

Updated February 2008

iPod touch 8GB
£199
- Up to 1,750 songs
- Up to 10,000 photos
- Up to 10 hours of video
- Available in black
- 3.5-inch screen
- 320x480 pixels
- WiFi (802.11b/g)
- Battery lasts up to 22 hours (audio)
- Battery lasts up to 5 hours (video)
- 110x61.8x8mm
- 120g

iPod touch 16GB
£269
- Up to 3,500 songs
- Up to 20,000 photos
- Up to 20 hours of video
- Available in black
- 3.5-inch screen
- 320x480 pixels
- WiFi (802.11b/g)
- Battery lasts up to 22 hours (audio)
- Battery lasts up to 5 hours (video)
- 110x61.8x8mm
- 120g

iPod touch 32GB
£329
- Up to 7,000 songs
- Up to 25,000 photos
- Up to 40 hours of video
- Available in black
- 3.5-inch screen
- 320x480 pixels
- WiFi (802.11b/g)
- Battery lasts up to 22 hours (audio)
- Battery lasts up to 5 hours (video)
- 110x61.8x8mm
- 120g

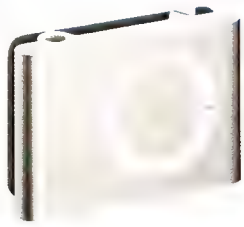


iPod classic

Updated September 2007

iPod classic 80GB
£159
Up to 20,000 songs
Up to 25,000 photos
Up to 100 hours of video
Available in black and silver
2.5-inch screen
320x240 pixels
Battery lasts up to 30 hours (audio)
Battery lasts up to 5 hours (video)
103.5x61.8x10.5mm
140g

iPod classic 160GB
£229
Up to 40,000 songs
Up to 25,000 photos
Up to 200 hours of video
Available in black and silver
2.5-inch screen
320x240 pixels
Battery lasts up to 40 hours (audio)
Battery lasts up to 7 hours (video)
103.5x61.8x13.5mm
162g



iPod shuffle

Updated February 2008

iPod shuffle 1GB
£32
Up to 240 songs
No ability to display photos or videos
Available in silver, blue, green, purple and (PRODUCT) RED
No screen
Battery lasts up to 12 hours (audio)
27.3x41.2x10.5mm
15.6g

iPod shuffle 1GB
£45
Up to 500 songs
No ability to display photos or videos
Available in silver, blue, green, purple and (PRODUCT) RED
No screen
Battery lasts up to 12 hours (audio)
27.3x41.2x10.5mm
15.6g

iPhone

Updated June 2008

iPhone 3G 8GB
From £FREE + contract
Up to 1,750 songs, 10,000 photos, or 10 hours of video
Available in black
3.5-inch screen
320x480 pixels
WiFi (802.11b/g)
Quad-band GSM, tri-band 3G
Assisted GPS
Bluetooth 2.0 + EDR
Battery lasts up to 24 hours (audio)
Battery lasts up to 7 hours (video)
Battery lasts up to 10 hours (talktime)
300 hours (standby)
115.5x62.1x12.3mm
133g

iPhone 3G 16GB
From £FREE + contract
Up to 3,500 songs, 20,000 photos, or 20 hours of video
Available in black or white
3.5-inch screen
320x480 pixels
WiFi (802.11b/g)
Quad-band GSM, tri-band 3G
Assisted GPS
Bluetooth 2.0 + EDR
Battery lasts up to 24 hours (audio)
Battery lasts up to 7 hours (video)
Battery lasts up to 10 hours (talktime)
300 hours (standby)
115.5x62.1x12.3mm
133g

iPod nano

Updated September 2007

iPod nano 4GB
£99
Up to 1,000 songs
Up to 3,500 photos
Up to 4 hours of video
Available in silver
2-inch screen
320x240 pixels
Battery lasts up to 24 hours (audio)
Battery lasts up to 5 hours (video)
69.8 x 52.3 x 6.5mm
49.2g

iPod nano 8GB
£129
Up to 2,000 songs
Up to 7,000 photos
Up to 8 hours of video
Available in silver, pink, blue, green, black and (PRODUCT) RED
2-inch screen
320x240 pixels
Battery lasts up to 24 hours (audio)
Battery lasts up to 5 hours (video)
69.8 x 52.3 x 6.5mm
49.2g

IPHONE vs iPOD TOUCH: HOW DO THEY DIFFER?

TOP GEAR

Extend your Mac with our pick of peripherals and software

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VoIP phones

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Games
Multimedia software

KEYBOARDS & MICE

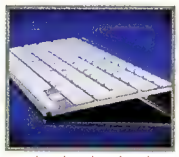
Apple Keyboard ★★★★★

ISSUE 187

Price: £29
Web: www.apple.com/uk
Full review: www.techradar.com/53747
Key specs: 2x USB 2.0 ports; slimline at 11x1x33cm; requires Mac OS X 10.4.10

+ Superslim; faster USB ports; easy to keep clean; comfortable to use; sleek design
− May prefer wireless version that's also available

"The Apple keyboard is sleek, ergonomic and now has extra keys. Once you've tried this you'll never go back to you old keyboard."



Apple Wireless Keyboard

Price: £49 **Reviewed:** Issue 189
Full review: www.techradar.com/53760
Key specs: Bluetooth; Exposé/Dashboard shortcuts; thin

★★★★★

+ Stunning; wireless; easy to type on; compact
− Needs Mac OS X 10.4.10 to work

Microsoft Mobile Memory Mouse 8000

Price: £45 **Reviewed:** Issue 190
Full review: www.techradar.com/217353
Key specs: Wireless; 1GB memory; RF and Bluetooth

★★★★★

+ Innovative cable design; rechargeable; 1GB storage
− Odd acceleration behaviour

PRINTERS

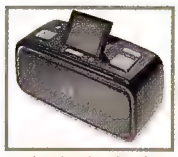
Canon PIXMA iP6600D ★★★★★

ISSUE 174

Price: £87
Web: www.canon.co.uk
Full review: www.techradar.com/53946
Key specs: Thermal inkjet; A4 prints; 9,600x2,400dpi; six-ink printing; duplex printing; DVD/CD label printing; memory card readers; PictBridge socket

+ Large LCD display; twin paper sources; DVD/CD label printing; duplex printing
− Slight fuzz on black text; slow compared to non-photo printers

"The iP6600D is a versatile printer giving quality prints, with more bells and whistles than a Morris-dancing troupe of football refs."



HP Photosmart A618

Price: £69 **Reviewed:** Issue 183
Full review: www.techradar.com/58073
Key specs: 3-colour inkjet; 4,800x1,200dpi

★★★★★

+ Good price; great prints; built-in bluetooth
− Bit slow

HP Color LaserJet 2605dn

Price: £276 **Reviewed:** Issue 173
Full review: www.techradar.com/57967
Key specs: 600x600dpi; duplex printing

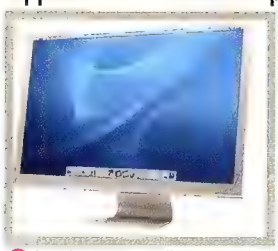
★★★★½

+ Great spec; good looking; excellent pics; quiet
− Miserly RAM configurations

DISPLAYS

Apple 23-inch Cinema Display ★★★★★

ISSUE 152



Price: £599
Web: www.apple.com/uk
Full review: www.techradar.com/225702
Key specs: Size: 23-inch (viewable), Native resolution: 1,920x1,200, Colours: 16.7million colours, Video: DVI display, USB ports: 2, FireWire 400 ports: 2, VESA mount compatible

+ Superb image; even illumination; built-in hubs
− No height adjustment

"Apple has really pulled off a trick with this 23-inch Cinema Display. Clarity, brightness, contrast and sharpness are all top-notch."

Eizo FlexScan S2110W

Price: £505 **Reviewed:** Issue 182
Full review: www.techradar.com/48701
Key specs: 1,680x1,050 res; 2x digital DVI, USB2.0

★★★★★

+ Smart features; brilliant picture; easy to use
− Expensive

Sharp Aquos LC32X20E

Price: £698 **Reviewed:** Issue 194
Full review: www.techradar.com/256594
Key specs: 32-inch LCD TV; 1,920x1,080 res

★★★★★

+ Great Mac and TV picture quality; impressive specs
− Need a lot of room to house it!

SCANNERS/ALL-IN-ONES

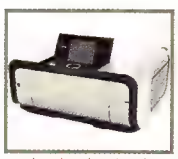
Canon CanoScan 8600F ★★★★★

ISSUE 186

Price: £149
Web: www.canon.co.uk
Full review: www.techradar.com/225903
Key specs: Charge Coupled Device; A4 max print size; document/film scanner; FARE level 3 scratch removal, 7x EZ buttons; Adobe *Photoshop Elements 4; LaserFast SE; ScanGear CS*

+ Excellent software bundle; produces speedy scans; good quality results
− Quite bulky

"It's fast, versatile, not too expensive and comes with a very impressive bundle of software. This is the best scanner by far."



Canon PIXMA MP610

Price: £49 **Reviewed:** Issue 186
Full review: www.techradar.com/203068
Key specs: Printer/scanner/copier; 2,400x9,600dpi

★★★★★

+ Lots of features; easy to use; cheap to run
− Slow duplex printing

Canon PIXMA MX700

Price: £131 **Reviewed:** Issue 191
Full review: www.techradar.com/218276
Key specs: Printer, scanner, copier, fax, OCR

★★★★½

+ Good quality scans and prints; lots of features
− No duplex

DIGITAL CAMERAS

Fujifilm FinePix F50fd ★★★★★

ISSUE 197

Price: £138
Web: www.fujifilm.co.uk
Full review: www.techradar.com/71926
Key specs: 12-megapixels; 35-1-5mm, f/2.8-8 lens system; 1/1.6-inch sensor size; 3x optical zoom; 8.2x digital zoom; image stabilisation; 25MB internal memory; 100-6400 ISO range

+ Great value for money; top low-light performance; easy to use; looks good
− Guilty of over-sharpening fine detail

"This camera is a cracking all-rounder with superb low-light performance. The Fujifilm FinePix F50fd is £138 well spent."

Canon EOS 40D

Price: £799 **Reviewed:** Issue 188
Full review: www.techradar.com/69985
Key specs: 10.1MP; Digic III and 14-bit processing

+ Lots of megapixels; wider ISO range; useful extras
− Some idiosyncratic functions

★★★★★

Canon Powershot A650IS

Price: £250 **Reviewed:** Issue 190
Full review: www.techradar.com/201771
Key specs: 12.1MP; Auto ISO, 80-1,600

+ Superb pictures; easy to grip; feature rich
− No RAW

★★★★½

DIGITAL VIDEO CAMERAS

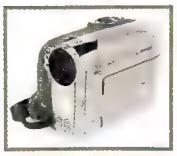
JVC GR-DF470EK ★★★★★

ISSUE 176

Price: £264
Web: www.jvc.co.uk
Full review: www.techradar.com/72721
Key specs: 15x optical zoom, 700x digital zoom; 2.5-inch LCD; 2.6-39mm focal length; MiniDV media – 8MB card supplied; mic socket; remote; 400g; 75x111x74mm

+ Solid build; great value for money; lots of features
− May need to keep manual at hand

"It's packed with features and built to last. The JVC GR-DF470EK is a quality camera at a staggeringly affordable price."



Canon MVX460

Price: £325 **Reviewed:** Issue 176
Full review: www.techradar.com/74243
Key specs: 20x optical zoom; MiniDV format

+ Stunning sound; simple controls; attractive
− Expensive; no media supplied

★★★★½

Canon HG10

Price: £670 **Reviewed:** Issue 190
Full review: www.techradar.com/216960
Key specs: HD format; 15hrs storage; 10x optical zoom

+ Superb images; native support for *iMovie '08*
− Some ergonomic mistakes; opaque menu system

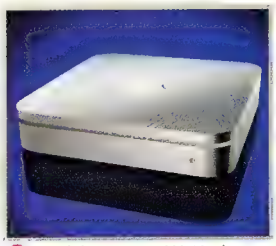
★★★★½

ROUTERS/NETWORKING

Apple AirPort Extreme Base Station

ISSUE 181

★★★★★



Price: £119
Web: www.apple.com/uk
Full review: www.techradar.com/31026
Key specs: 165x165x34mm; 1x USB 2.0, 3x Ethernet, 1x WAN; 802.11n, 802.11a/b/g; WEP (40/128-bit), WPA, WPA2, MAC address filtering, NAT firewall

+ Easy disk mounting; 802.11n; huge range; up to 50 users
− UK restricted to 2.4GHz channel; no modem

"The AirPort Extreme Base Station enables easy Mac integration and provides a fast, secure wireless network setup in minutes."

Linksys Wireless-N Gateway WAG325N

Price: £90 **Reviewed:** Issue 185
Full review: www.techradar.com/31179
Key specs: ADSL 2+ support; 802.11g/802.11b

+ Great spec; easy to set up; good transfer rates
− Not the best looking device

★★★★★

Apple AirPort Express

Price: £65 **Reviewed:** Issue 195
Full review: www.techradar.com/311070
Key specs: 802.11a/b/g/n; WEP, WPA, WPA 2

+ Easy to set up; AirTunes is great; supports Windows
− Still need to add a broadband router

★★★★★

STORAGE

Iomega 500GB MiniMax ★★★★★

ISSUE 182

Price: £158
Web: www.iomega-europe.com
Full review: www.techradar.com/226173
Key specs: 500GB capacity; 3x FireWire 400, 3x USB 2.0 ports; up to 480MB/sec (USB 2.0) and 400MB/sec (FireWire 400) data transfer speeds; *Dantz Retrospect* backup software; FireWire 400 cable

+ Large capacity; doubles as USB/FireWire hub; perfect Mac mini shape; very fast
− Bit pricey

"The perfect companion to your Mac mini is now available with substantially improved capacity, offering superfast transfer speeds."

Western Digital My Book Pro

Price: £140 **Reviewed:** Issue 173
Full review: www.techradar.com/47284
Key specs: 500GB capacity; FireWire 400/800/USB 2.0

+ Slim build; lightweight; elegant; brushed metal
− Too delicate for some people's tastes

★★★★★

Buffalo LinkStation Live 500GB

Price: £211 **Reviewed:** Issue 183
Full review: www.techradar.com/226250
Key specs: iTunes server; USB 2.0 backups

+ Mac savvy; seamless sharing; USB ports
− Expensive

★★★★

HOW TO BUY...

a mini photo printer

1 WHAT IS IT?
A mini photo printer is a small, compact printer that prints postcard-sized photos. They have slots for docking camera cards directly and usually a USB port for connecting to a Mac.

2 BASIC FEATURES
You need one with a good-sized colour LCD screen so you can easily browse photos, and a camera card slot that suits your camera. You don't even need a computer to use most mini photo printers.

3 BATTERIES
Look for a printer with a battery bay. These can be popped in a travel bag and taken with you anywhere, without lugging a socket adaptor around with you.

4 PRICE AND BRANDS
Epson, Canon and, to a lesser extent, HP rule the roost and dominate the mini printer market. Expect to pay upwards of £90 for a decent model.

5 DON'T FORGET...
...to tot up the running costs. Once you've bought your printer you have to factor in the costs of print cartridges and other consumables like paper. These constitute a huge cost over time.

Editor's choice

Where Graham's cash is heading...

Apple iMac 20-inch 2.66GHz

Price £949
Manufacturer Apple
Web www.apple.com/uk
Full review www.techradar.com/379780

Can you believe the iMac is ten years old? While the latest revision from Apple, see p82, may look different to the original Bondi Blue iMac G3, it still promotes the same revolutionary design ethos. Before the iMac, home computers were beige boxes, but after its release PC manufacturers started to think differently about design.

But which iMac should you choose? There are four iMacs, from an entry-level 20-inch 2.4GHz iMac at £799, up to the 24-inch 3.06GHz monster at £1,389.

A 24-inch screen is a bit big for home use, so I'd opt for the 20-inch 2.66GHz version at £949, which offers the best compromise of price and features. The new 20-inch iMac is startlingly good. Quite how Apple manages to pack a 2.66GHz processor, 320GB hard drive, SuperDrive and 2GB of RAM into the back of a monitor without the whole thing overheating is a miracle of modern engineering.

"If you want a quality Mac for your home, then this is the one to go for."

SPEAKERS

Fujitsu Ten Eclipse TD307PAII ★★★★★

ISSUE 186

Price: £400
Web: www.fujitsu-ten.co.jp
Full review: www.techradar.com/226352
Key specs: 15W max output; 10-100kHz frequency; 85dB signal/noise ratio; amp (15.9x13.7x15.4cm); 2x speakers (19x17.6x13cm)

+ Superb sound; fantastic design; easy positioning
− No remote

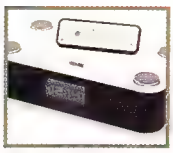
"A great addition and complement to any Mac desktop with phenomenal sound and a fantastic design."

Acoustic Energy Aego-M

Price: £130 **Reviewed:** Issue 191
Full review: www.techradar.com/100419
Key specs: Twin satellites and sub-bass; 90 RMS output

+ Look great; easy to use and set up; superb sound
− Not many extra features

★★★★★



XtremeMac Luna1

Price: £69 **Reviewed:** Issue 185
Full review: www.techradar.com/226474
Key specs: iPod speaker; AM/FM radio; 3.5mm jack

+ Well built; good sound; excellent remote; dim LCD
− Expensive for what it is

★★★★★

DIGITAL MUSIC PLAYERS

Apple iPod nano ★★★★★

ISSUE 188

Price: £99/£129
Web: www.apple.com/uk
Full review: www.techradar.com/226601
Key specs: 4GB (silver only); 8GB (silver, blue, green, black, PRODUCT (RED)); 2-inch colour display; battery can provide up to 24hrs music playback or 5hrs video

+ Amazing screen resolution; small and light; new menus and Cover Flow
− Small screen for video; stubby design; 8GB maximum capacity

"Apple has once again raised the bar with the new iPod nano, and the competition will struggle to keep up. Just needs more storage."

Apple iPod classic

Price: £159/£229 **Reviewed:** Issue 188
Full review: www.techradar.com/226641
Key specs: 80GB/160GB; black or silver; video playback

+ Phenomenal value; redesigned interface; good audio
− Must re-buy purchased games

★★★★½

Apple iPod touch 32GB

Price: £329 **Reviewed:** Issue 193
Full review: www.techradar.com/221658
Key specs: 8GB &16GB also available; WiFi browsing

+ Great touchscreen; decent memory size; new apps
− Not cheap!

★★★★★

iPOD ACCESSORIES

Gear4 BluEye ★★★★★

ISSUE 178

Price: £50
Web: www.gear4.co.uk
Full review: www.techradar.com/226518
Key specs: For fourth- and fifth-gen iPods, iPod mini and iPod nano

+ Answer calls by remote; great sound quality; voice-activated dialling
− Nothing at all

"Quite possibly the best iPod accessory we've ever seen. It really is that good and deserves the accolade. Buy one now!"

iSkin Cerulean TX+RX

Price: £92 **Reviewed:** Issue 193
Full review: www.techradar.com/224088
Key specs: 10m range; easy USB connection

+ Easy setup; wide signal range; great sound transfer
− High price

★★★★★

Macally TunePro Flat Panel

Price: £60 **Reviewed:** Issue 191
Full review: www.techradar.com/218943
Key specs: 33.5x11.5x13cm; 0.6kg

+ Great sound; good build; easy to slap snooze button
− Remote sold separately

★★★★★

VOIP PHONES

RTX DualPhone 3088 DECT ★★★★★

ISSUE 180

Price: £99
Web: www.skypestyle.com
Full review: www.techradar.com/226730
Key specs: Cordless phone; Skype keys (make call, hang up, hold call, mute); SkypeOut support; two function buttons, plus a button ring for menu options; nine-line colour LCD; can be used without Mac

+ Cordless; for landline and Skype calls; looks good
− Sound quality could be better

"The wireless RTX DualPhone DECT has all the bases covered. It provides the advantages of roaming around and handles all calls."

Cyberphone-W Mac

Price: £31 **Reviewed:** Issue 180
Full review: www.techradar.com/226787
Key specs: Corded phone; Mac software; stand

+ Good sound; great software; easy to set up
− Cord can get in the way

★★★★½

Belkin WiFi Phone for Skype

Price: £120 **Reviewed:** Issue 180
Full review: www.techradar.com/93730
Key specs: Cordless phone; colour LCD; no Mac needed

+ Good range; no setting up required
− Sound can suffer from distortion

★★★★☆

HOME OFFICE

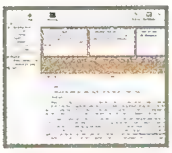
Roxio Toast 9 Titanium ★★★★★

ISSUE 195

Price: £70
Web: www.roxio.co.uk
Full review: www.techradar.com/311459
System reqs: Mac OS X 10.4 or Mac OS X 10.5; 600MB hard disk space; 15GB temporary free disk space during usage; CD, DVD or Blu-ray recordable drive; *QuickTime 7* or higher

+ Superb bundle; HD video burning (with plug-in); bundled backup app
− Expensive upgrade

"Toast 9 Titanium is a great suite and still the burning king, but think carefully before buying the relatively expensive upgrade."



Scrivener 1.0

Price: $35 (£17) **Reviewed:** Issue 185
Full review: www.techradar.com/33080
System reqs: Mac OS X 10.4

+ Reliable; great for writers; top export options
− Nothing

★★★★★

FileMaker Bento

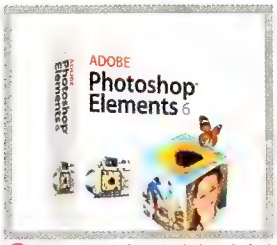
Price: £29 **Reviewed:** Issue 191
Full review: www.techradar.com/218102
System reqs: 867MHz G4; Mac OS X 10.5; 512MB RAM

+ Simple to use; integrates with *Address Book* and *iCal*
− No Apple *Mail* integration

★★★★★

VISUAL TOOLS AND LAYOUT

Adobe Photoshop Elements 6 ★★★★★



ISSUE 194

Price: £58
Web: www.adobe.com/uk
Full review: www.techradar.com/224437
System reqs: PowerPC G4, G5 or multicore Intel processor; OS X 10.4.8-10.5; 512MB RAM (1GB recommended); 64MB video RAM, 1GB available hard disk space; a DVD drive

+ Nice new interface; Guided mode for beginners; Colour Curves is a move forward
− Layer Masks still tricky; small type on grey is hard to see; takes over entire screen

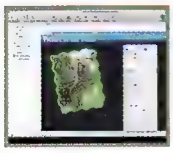
"Photoshop Elements 6 is insanely good value for money. It's worth every penny and great fun to use."

Lemke Software GraphicConverter 6.0

Price: $35 (£17) **Reviewed:** Issue 187
Full review: www.techradar.com/226888
Sys reqs: Mac OS X 10.4.4

+ Opens anything; great batch processing; rich features
− Could do with a visual facelift

★★★★★



Softpress Freeway Pro 5

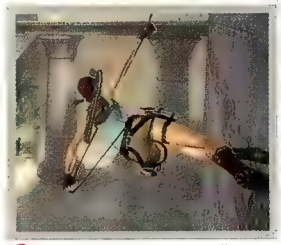
Price: £123 **Reviewed:** Issue 195
Full review: www.techradar.com/311508
Sys reqs: Mac OS X10.4.11+

+ Improved performance; great new Actions
− Single undos; lacklustre Graphics Actions

★★★★★

GAMES

Tomb Raider Anniversary ★★★★★



ISSUE 193

Price: £35
Web: www.feralinteractive.com
System reqs: Intel Mac 1.8GHz; 512MB RAM; Mac OS X 10.4.1; 4GB hard drive space; 128GB VRAM

+ Looks great; controls are excellent; Lara moves beautifully; puzzling is rewarding
− Some camera problems persist

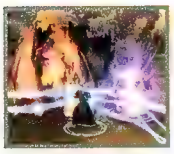
"There are still a few camera issues but this is a satisfying return to form for the series. It's considerably better than the original."

Enemy Territory: Quake Wars

Price: £40 **Reviewed:** Issue 196
Web: www.aspyr.com
System reqs: Intel Core 2 Duo; 1GB RAM; OS X 10.5.1

+ Objective-based gameplay; meaty weapons
− Looks bland in places

★★★★★



Neverwinter Nights 2

Price: £40 **Reviewed:** Issue 195
Web: www.atari.com/nwn2
System reqs: Intel 2GHz, 1GB RAM, Mac OS X 10.4.11

+ Vast single-player campaign; great depth; intriguing
− Crap camera

★★★★★

MULTIMEDIA SOFTWARE

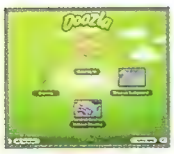
Apple Logic Studio ★★★★★

ISSUE 189

Price: £319
Web: www.apple.com/uk
Full review: www.techradar.com/227009
System reqs: G4/G5 with 1.25GHz processor; 1GB RAM; Mac OS X 10.4.9+; 1,024x768 resolution screen; *QuickTime 7.2* or later; 7GB HD space; DVD drive

+ Awesome power; sounds great; unbeatable value; intuitive new interface
− Old users may baulk at the new-look interface

"Apple Logic Studio is an amazingly comprehensive professional music package. And it's unbeatable value for Mac users."



Plasq Doozla 1.1

Price: $25 (£13) **Reviewed:** Issue 196
Full review: www.techradar.com/354362
System reqs: Mac OS X 10.4.6+

+ Great layout; lots of fun for kids and adults; stable;
− Nothing at all

★★★★★

BeLight Software Disc Cover 2

Price: $35 (£18) **Reviewed:** Issue 195
Full review: www.techradar.com/311267
System reqs: Mac OS X 10.4+; 100MB disk space

+ Impressive templates; intuitive; easy to use; cheap
− Can feel slow at times

★★★★★

Have you thought about an upgrade?

A memory upgrade is one of the cheapest ways to increase the performance of your mac!

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www.bbmug.co.uk

[3] Berkshire & North Hampshire MUG
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[4] Blackburn MUG
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[7] Cork University College
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[8] Cumbria Mac Enthusiasts
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home.clara.net/steel/cme_home.htm

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www.wamug.org.uk

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Doncaster & other towns
oldgit@dircon.co.uk
www.ymug.org

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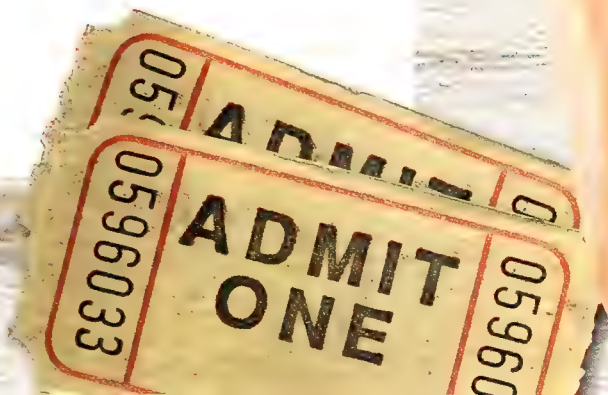

MUG OF THE MONTH

Three Counties MUG

The well-established Three Counties Mac User Group covers Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire and Buckinghamshire. Regular meetings are held in Luton on the third Tuesday or Wednesday of every month at 8pm.

"If you've just bought your first Mac, or if you've been using them for years, our group has something to help you get more out of your computer," it says on the MUG's website.

The highlight of the MUG meetings is the talks that are arranged. They have a mix of informative speakers offering help and advice with problems, and a chance to learn how to do everything from designing your own web page to starting out in digital photography.

"Our meetings are informal and we meet in a quiet café, which is opened exclusively for the group. We have a mix of members, young and older, experienced computer users and those just starting out," the website continues.

We first featured the Three Counties MUG in these pages of *MacFormat* as our MUG of the Month back in issue 175, and it's good to see that the group is still going strong. Its recent talk on 13 May, for example, offered the chance to hear from speakers who all backed up their Mac in different ways, including using Apple's *Time Machine* (and Time Capsule), the excellent *SuperDuper!* and more.

Please visit the Three Counties MUG website at **www.3cmug.co.uk** for more details. ●

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Mac User Groups are social clubs for Mac users. They offer an opportunity for Apple fans to meet each other and share their hobby. Activities vary from group to group, but typically they provide technical help, product demonstrations and the occasional guest talks from knowledgeable outsiders. To find out more about User Groups in your area, visit www.macusersuk.org

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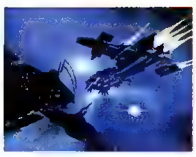
Games

This issue, Andy Dyer recreates WWII and treads on Hollow Ground

SNIPPETS

Watch this space



EVE Online players can now check out the latest information on the upcoming expansion, *Empyrean Age*, on a new website. When released the expansion will see the four playable factions preparing for war. For the uninitiated, *EVE Online* enables players to take part in a struggle for power, mining for resources, building in economic strength and battling other players. To get a taste of the future of online galactic warfare, head over to www.eve-online.com/empyreanage.

The waiting game

The long wait is over... almost. In a recent press release, Vivendi outlined its financial results and further let slip that the next *World of Warcraft* expansion, *Wrath of the Lich King*, will be released in 2008. Granted that gives us another six months during which to speculate, but at least we know we'll be able to level up to 80 and run riot across a whole new continent before Santa next empties his big red sack. Ho, ho, ho!

ADVENTURE

Jack Keane

OUT... JUNE 2008

From the maker of Ankh comes an adventure that looks pretty similar

Set in England in colonial times (historians can confirm for us whether or not this was the 17th or 18th century – we must have fallen asleep during that particular history lesson), *Jack Keane* sees the title character accepting a charter to take a British secret agent to the mysterious Tooth Island. Now call us suspicious, but every island that's ever had the word 'island' in its name and an adjectival reference to a body part spells almost certain doom to anyone who visits it.

When Jack's ship gets dashed on Tooth Island's treacherous cliffs and the secret agent in his charge gets eaten by a mysterious jungle monster, our hapless hero is thrown into a somewhat bewildering series of events that not only proves highly challenging but also sheds light on mysterious events in his past.

Tooth Island is, unfortunately, inhabited and is ruled over by a curious character called Doctor T, who is engaged in creating man-eating plants and who plans to take over the British Empire (what a cad). Even more mysterious is the fact that he seems to know Jack even though the hero has no recollection of even meeting the madman.

Over the course of the game, Jack will also meet a rather alluring and ambitious young lady called Amanda, who at first is allied to the evil Doctor but who soon comes to question her loyalties.

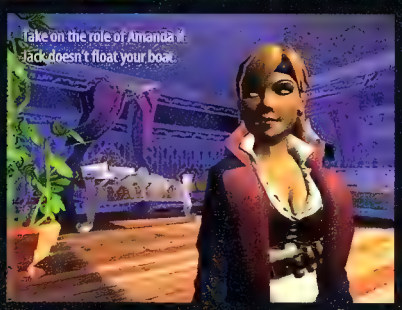
The game takes place over 15 exotic locations, features an orchestral soundtrack and is made all the more atmospheric by the plentiful cinematic cut-scenes.

This game, being from the maker of *Ankh*, features plenty of humour as Jack gets himself into all sorts of scrapes. There is also, intriguingly, the opportunity to take control of Jack or Amanda, although whether this just refers to the occasional sections featuring Amanda or the ability to choose either character for the entire adventure remains unclear.

The techies out there will be delighted by (or indifferent to) the fact that the game will feature full-screen effects including glow, depth of field, motion blur and soft-edged shadows. Add to that dynamic lighting and particle effects and you have a game that will look quite nice, probably.

Based on the enjoyment and frustration we experienced while playing the *Ankh* games, *Jack Keane* is certainly an adventure we're looking forward to playing.

After crashing into Tooth Island, adventure b...



Take on the role of Amanda if Jack doesn't float your boat.

Come on, Jack, there's no time to stand around.

ACTION STRATEGY

Battlestations: Midway

£30 Take to the seas and the skies in this fun recreation of WWII Pacific warfare

CONTACT INFO

Developer Eidos Interactive Ltd
www.battlestations.net
Vendor Feral
www.feralinteractive.com

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

1.83GHz processor, 512MB RAM, Mac OS X 10.4, 128MB VRAM, 4.3GB hard drive space, DVD drive

FOR AND AGAINST

- ➕ Proper dogfighting
- ➕ Excellent naval action
- ➕ Manageable objectives
- ➕ Strategic play
- ➕ Multiplayer options
- ➖ Looks too clean

VERDICT

★★★★★

"Battlestations is a simple yet challenging slice of exciting no-nonsense warfare. Messing about in boats and in the air is a winning combination."

We recently questioned how much longer gamers can maintain an interest in games based on World War II. The answer seems to be indefinitely. And the appetite for historically accurate wargames (well, accurate-ish) looks set to be further stoked by *Battlestations: Midway*, which takes you out of the gritty world of trench and urban warfare to open spaces of naval and aerial combat.

Training levels

Here, the usual starting point of the Normandy beach landings and the battlefields of Europe are replaced by the shocking and unexpected Japanese attack on US forces in the Pacific. In order to gain the skills to succeed both on the water and in the air, it's necessary to play through an over-long series of training levels which spoon-feed you the finer points of not crashing boats and planes while shooting down enemy craft.

Controlling boats at first seems a trudge given their relatively slow movement and tediously large turning circles. However, once you get used to the pace of the vessels, the pacing of the objectives in the single-player campaign along with the explosive action surrounding you and the fun of using a varied arsenal of naval weaponry proves thoroughly addictive.

Piloting your craft is simple. You can speed up, slow down, reverse, turn left and right, and that's as complicated as it gets. While performing such manoeuvres you can also take advantage of a few choice weapons. Air attack can be fought off using the deck-mounted guns, other vessels can be sunk using torpedoes, and submarines can be dealt with by dropping depth charges on them.

The missions can be pretty demanding, but are chopped into manageable objectives and punctuated with cut-scenes that genuinely whip up the chaotic atmosphere of the conflict and keep the player interested in his or her part in the proceedings. A typical mission might include making your way to a waypoint, fending off waves of aircraft, sinking landing craft before they reach shore and taking out submarines. And speaking of submarines, you get to have a go on these, too, launching torpedoes when at periscope level or using deck-mounted guns when on the surface.

Just as thrilling (and certainly a lot speedier) is the experience of taking to the skies for a spot of aerial combat. Again there's no attempt to simulate real aircraft. Instead we're presented with a basic set of controls that make piloting effortless and allow you to enjoy the fun part of battle, namely zooming around in the thick of a dogfight. Firing machine guns at agile enemy fighters is a tricky but hugely satisfying sport, as is flying low to strafe ships, or delivering a deadly payload of bombs, or setting torpedoes on their way to their target.

"Battlestations: Midway takes you out of gritty urban warfare to open spaces of naval and aerial combat"

As we all know, the war wasn't won by a single bloke in a plane or a boat. No, it was a team effort, so as the game progresses you're called upon to master strategic unit management. Things are kept fairly simple, with the selection of units and issuing of orders achieved through a couple of mouse clicks on the map screen. In this way you can send units to waypoints, order them to attack, get them to engage in free fire, or ask for specific actions such as getting subs to fire torpedoes and commanding aircraft to fly in formation. You'll also be required to carry out repairs to any craft that get into strife.

Clean and colourful

Visually, apart from some lovely water effects, the game is perhaps not quite as authentic as it should be, with the various air and sea craft appearing rather clean and colourful. Nevertheless, the clean looks seem to be aligned with the entire game's approach of keeping things simple.

The mix of cut-scenes and varied arsenal of weapons makes *Midway* an exciting battle.

ACTION ADVENTURE

Hollow Ground SE

£20 Old-school tactical gaming combined with a modern look

CONTACT INFO

Developer Blackwight
www.blackwight.com
Vendor AESCAPIA AB
www.aescapia.com/games/hgse

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

Universal binary, Mac OS X 10.3 or later, 29MB hard disk space

FOR AND AGAINST

- ⊕ Tough challenges
- ⊕ Nice characters
- ⊕ Multiple weapons
- ⊕ Different level types
- ⊖ Too much restarting
- ⊖ Badly designed scenery

VERDICT

★★★

"HGSE is fairly unpolished but it's a fun action adventure in the style of the arcade classic, Gauntlet."

Those of you who are gnarled and wizened enough to have enjoyed Midway's original *Gauntlet* coin-op – in which up to four players could hack and slash their way through level after level of dungeon-exploring fantasy action – will no doubt be getting excited at the prospect of Eidos' re-imagining of the game, due out on Nintendo DS later in the year. Should you not have the patience to wait, or, more likely, you can't bring yourself to eschew your shiny Mac in favour of a handheld console, you might be able to satisfy the desire for basic arcade-style dungeoneering with *Hollow Ground Special Edition*.

Although *Hollow Ground SE* is set in the future, the dungeon exploring and zombie fighting is similar to that of old arcade classic, *Gauntlet*.

Protagonists and zombies

Orc lovers beware, though. *HGSE* is set in the future and has the protagonists fighting zombie-like creatures rather than traditional fantasy fare – but otherwise this is a fairly traditional action/exploration game in the *Gauntlet* vein.

Adhering to the unwritten laws of independently coded games, the plot here is flimsy and smells faintly of cheese. You find yourself in a dark future, torn by centuries of war and, for reasons that are so badly explained they needn't have bothered trying, you have to enter the Epsilon Bunker to root out and finish off once and for all the various subterranean evil-doers. Yes, quite. We're none the wiser and we've played the game.

Whether playing alone or taking on the challenge co-operatively with a friend, you get to control a party, one at a time, of four adventurers with differing abilities. To be fair to the creative people involved they've come up with some cracking names for the characters. Donna Black is a Street Samurai who can wield Shuriken, sawtooth swords and bouncing stars and is strongest in close quarters combat. Walter Surmbrand is a deep space marine, which basically means he uses guns a lot. Russell Blake (who one of our colleagues is almost certain he went to school with) is a road warrior and specialises in explosives. Bringing up the rear is Mortimer Kaine, a Psionicist who uses Psi missiles, Psionic globes and other assorted Psi-based weapons (for 'Psi' read 'glowy made-up projectile blobs').

The gameplay itself is repetitive in the extreme but oddly compelling. You enter a dungeon (or bunker) and proceed from the start to the exit plugging away at bad guys with your weapons as you go. Some areas are swarming with enemies so you need to take out the generators from which they spawn before proceeding. Other areas are blocked by one-way force fields, or locked barriers that require the flicking of a switch to circumvent. The various weapons for each character can be picked up along the way and the levels are made interesting through some inventive design that sees you by turns having to plough through hordes of enemies, trying to navigate your way through a maze-like bunker, working out a route via multiple teleport pads, or racing against the clock to find the exit before something unspeakable happens.

"Adhering to the unwritten laws of independently coded games, the plot is flimsy and smells of cheese"

Glitches

But there are problems. Thanks to some ill-advised watery sections, your progress slows down unexpectedly and unnecessarily. Some of the scenery is hard to fathom, leaving you unclear as to whether or not your way is blocked. And the fact that your characters, when they die, cannot be resurrected is annoying. This latter problem results in you having to play through the early stages repeatedly, as you try to make sure a character lasts long enough to give you a decent shot at completing the game. Otherwise, this is a diverting homage to an old classic.

Each character has a specialist skill, from Samurai sword fighting to building bombs.

SURVIVAL HORROR

Penumbra: Black Plague

£20 The sequel to Penumbra: Overture is no less spooky than the original

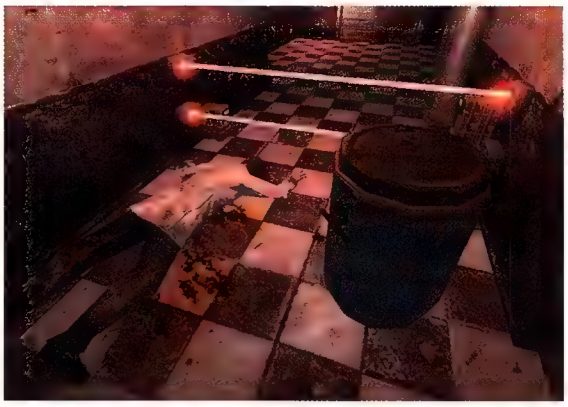
Last issue we reviewed *Penumbra: Overture*. If you bought it on the basis of our review you'll have been both delighted by the gaming experience and somewhat gutted when it all came to an abrupt end. The sequel, *Penumbra: Black Plague*, features the same realistic physics although, it has to be said, the system has been honed and polished.

The puzzles are a little more imaginative, and the combat, which was pretty clumsy in the first game, has been almost entirely dispensed of in favour of a structure that sees you exploring, stumbling across something truly terrifying and running away.

The story is also told with more panache. The voice acting is better (it could hardly be worse), and the writers seem to have got to grips with their craft (and their dictionaries) and have created a script that is amusing, intriguing and a bit cheesy.

We won't tell you too much about the plot, but here the protagonist takes up the tale from where the first game left off. He delves deeper into the mystery of the excavations that have taken place in the icy wastelands of Greenland, and the catastrophic results of the menace that has subsequently been unleashed.

The visuals seem more slick in *Black Plague*. The use of light and shade just seems a little better balanced and once again the ambient sounds of grunting creatures, moaning breezes, general creaking, and terrified human voices add to the air of menace.



Penumbra: Black Plague is a sound sequel to *Overture*, with a good story and improved graphics.

All in all, *Black Plague* is an accomplished follow-up to *Overture*, just as good where it counts, and better in several ways. The only things that drop it short of five stars are the brevity of the adventure, and the fact it won't run on Macs with integrated graphics. ●

CONTACT INFO

Developer Frictional Games
www.frictionalgames.com
Vendor Frictional Games
www.penumbrablackplague.com

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

1.5GHz Mac, 512MB RAM, Mac OS X 10.4 or later, 300MB hard disk space, Radeon 9600/ GeForce 4 (GeForce 4 MX not supported)

FOR AND AGAINST

- ⊕ Spooky atmosphere
- ⊕ Terrifying sounds
- ⊕ Logical puzzles
- ⊕ Excellent story
- ⊖ Pretty short
- ⊖ Graphically hungry

VERDICT

★★★★

"If you haven't yet experienced Penumbra's scary world, do so now."

SHOOT-'EM-UP

Neon Tango

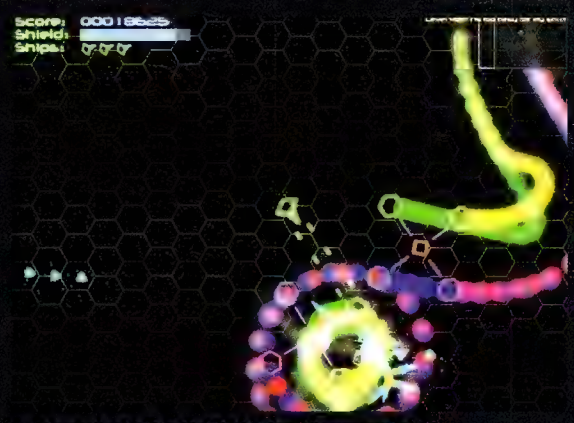
$25 (£13) It's like Asteroids, Berserk and Smash TV all rolled into one game

Videogaming is dangerously post-modern at the moment. Quite apart from the amount of sequels getting churned out, we're also faced with a deluge of retro gaming opportunities. Let's embrace the opportunity to enjoy retro-style gaming, because it occasionally delivers titles like this. *Neon Tango* is not a classic by any means, but it is an enjoyably simplistic shooter presented with old-fashioned vector graphic stylings.

The game lives up to its name with the player's spaceship engaged in a sort of dance with the waves of enemies. This is in no small part down to the fact that your ship is perpetually in motion. You can boost to go faster, but you never come to a complete standstill, so a large part of the challenge is constantly adjusting your trajectory so you don't float into trouble.

The crux of the gameplay is simple. Each level takes the form of a very basic play area segmented by glowing neon walls. The player pilots a ship that can rotate, thrust, fire and charge primary and secondary weapons at a variety of geometrically shaped enemies. Clear all the enemies and a Boss character appears.

This pattern is repeated throughout the game's 50 levels and, thanks to some manic action, it'll take you a good while to make it through all of them. Variety comes from different play modes including the campaign trawl through 50 levels, survival, fast score and fast level.



It's all glowy and made of lines. Hey kids, this is how videogames used to be.

You can play any of the 50 levels individually, but this spoils the surprise of playing the game through properly. Fans of classic games like *Tempest* and *Geometry Wars* will find this a poorer cousin, but even so it's a solidly built and nicely designed shooter.

CONTACT INFO

Developer Freeverse
www.freeverse.com
Vendor Freeverse
www.freeverse.com

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

G4, G5 or Intel 800MHz or faster, 512MB RAM, Mac OS X 10.4+, 32MB VRAM, 500MB hard drive space

FOR AND AGAINST

- ⊕ Lovely visuals
- ⊕ Simple gameplay
- ⊕ Cool organic Bosses
- ⊖ Frantic action
- ⊖ Nice soundtrack
- ⊖ A bit samey

VERDICT

★★★★☆

"Neon Tango is a diverting modern take on a combination of classic games."

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The *MacFormat* disc has an easy-to-use interface menu.

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FEATURED SOFTWARE

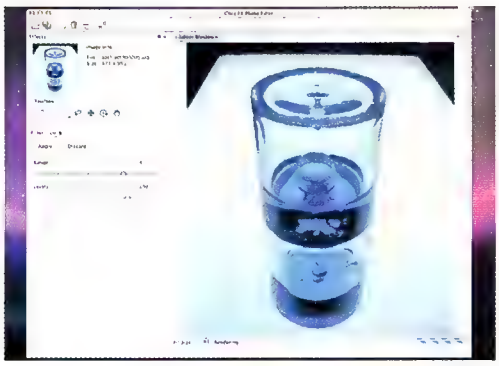
Edit images, write text for the web and keep track of time

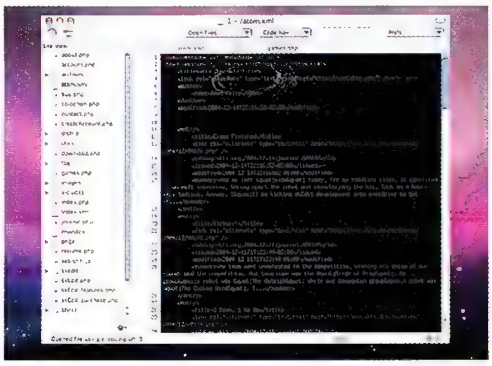
AS SOLD FOR $29 (£15)

Citra FX 2.0

Manipulate your images with this easy-to-use editor

For many, *Photoshop* is expensive when you want to make basic photo adjustments. With the full version of *Citra FX* that's on your disc this issue, anybody can turn digital images into a unique masterpiece regardless of their experience. A plethora of filters are integrated into the package such as colour adjustment, contrast, exposure and more advanced techniques like water ripple and emboss. *Citra FX* requires Mac OS X 10.4 or later to run.





AS SOLD FOR $35 (£18)

skEdit 3.6.3

Build an online presence with this handy web tool

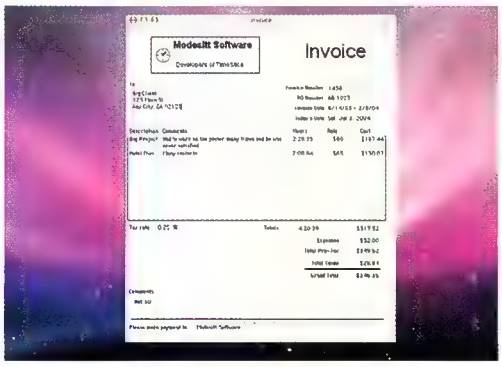
You may know it as *skHTML*, but now rebranded as *skEdit*, this full product is a text editor aimed at web developers. With it you have the power to amend languages including HTML, CSS, JavaScript, PHP, Perl, Python, ASP and ColdFusion. Also useful is its Site View, enabling you to preview your work before going live on the web. There are also functions for validating and cleaning your files, and support for regular expression and snippet use. Requires at least Mac OS X 10.3 to run.

AS SOLD FOR $49 (£25)

TimeSlice 2.8

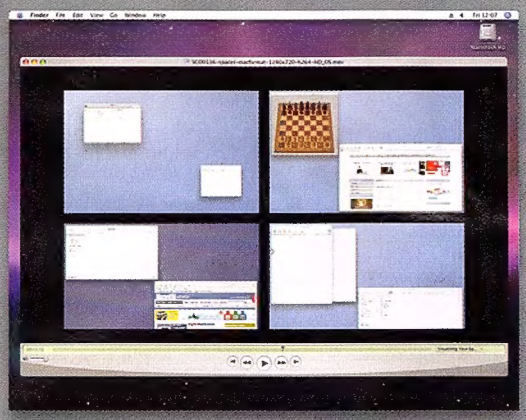
Increase your efficiency by keeping track of your time

One of life's major problems is not having enough time to accomplish all the tasks required of you. This is where *TimeSlice* can assist – you'll have the opportunity to track how long you spend on specific undertakings and ensure you make maximum use of the time in your day. Use the integrated database to produce projects, categories and clients. Then track all historic time data and use it to produce budgets, graphs and more. Requires Mac OS X 10.4 or later.



LEOPARD VIDEO TRAINING

The latest release of Leopard from Apple isn't merely a collection of bug fixes – there's a multitude of new tools hidden away. If you've not unearthed these, then you may wish to divert your attention to the tutorials housed on this issue's disc. With the help of ScreenCastsOnline you'll learn how to use one of 10.5's new utilities, which goes under the guise of Spaces. In a feature-packed 20 minutes you'll be educated on Spaces' concepts, setting up spaces, moving between spaces, visualising space and more. If you found this tutorial useful, your next point of call should be **www.screencastsonline.com**, where you can sign up for access to over 150 tutorials at resolutions suitable for all your Apple video-playing devices.



The ScreenCastsOnline website provides over 150 video tutorials on Mac OS X.

ALSO ON THE DISC

Resources, audio podcasts and more!

ROYALTY-FREE IMAGES

130 free photos

Images for your projects

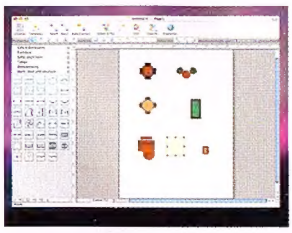
From Creativity103, this library of image resources of background textures and abstract photography have been honed to inspire new creative design ideas.

FREE GAME

FlightGear 1.0

Open source flight simulator

Unlike other games of a similar genre, *FlightGear 1.0* is entirely community-driven, meaning anybody with inspiration can contribute to newer versions of the game.



SOFTWARE DEMO

ConceptDraw 7.6

Create timelines and flowcharts

ConceptDr ts you accomplis your professional flowchar agramming and illustrati itions in no time at all wi sy-to-use tools and fea

iWORK RESOURCES

Keynote add-ons

Liven up your presentations

iPresentee.com's add-ons enable you to liven up your *Keynote* presentations. Use the theme, animation and other extras in your next slideshow to avoid having a dreary-eyed audience.

PODCAST

MacFormat This Week

Essential audio from the team

Once you've read the magazine, why not listen to three recent broadcasts of our 30-minute podcast? Be sure to subscribe on *iTunes* so that you don't miss out in the future.

AUDIO TUTORIAL

Learn Japanese

Enhance your language skills

If you're planning a trip to Japan or you're a fan of manga and want to understand what the characters are saying without reading subtitles, these audio language lessons will help.

DISC CONTENTS

All the great Mac software on this issue's disc

FULL PROGRAMS
Citra FX 2.0
skEdit 3.6.3
TimeSlice 2.8

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28 April 2008
12 May 2008
26 May 2008

RESOURCES
Disc artwork
Keynote add-ons
Learn Japanese
Leopard video training
Royalty-free images

RECOMMENDED
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ConceptDraw 7.6
Infovox iVox 1.2
Kerio MailServer 6.5.1
Live 7.0.7
skEdit 4.1
TimeSlice 4.1

FREEWARE TOOLKIT
Adium X 1.2.4
Audacity 1.3.5
FlexTD 1.0
JetPhoto Studio 3.0
LH-ABC 3.3.0.1
MonsterText 2.0
Opera 9.27
Practiquemos 1.5.5b
Scheduler 5.0
Sunbird 0.8

READER OFFERS

Upgrade to TimeSlice 3 or 4
Depending on your needs you can upgrade to either version 3 or 4 with a 20% discount. This can be taken advantage of when you register *TimeSlice 2* using the form on the disc.

Get Citra FX 2.5 for 30% less!
Purchase the latest edition of the photo-manipulation software for a 30% reduction in price. Simply enter **22610042** in the relevant field at the checkout when buying from **www.kiyut.com.**

Upgrade to skEdit
For just $34.95 you can have the most current release of this web development software. Just go to **www.skti.org/purchase/skedit** to take advantage of this offer.

3 full programs!

Plus widgets, shareware, games, video tutorials & more

Future Technology coverdisc
This disc has been thoroughly scanned and tested at all stages of production, but – as with any new software – we still recommend that you run a virus checker before use. We also recommend that you have an up-to-date backup of your hard disk(s) before using this disc.

Future Publishing cannot accept responsibility for any disruption, damage and/or loss of data to your data or computer system that may occur while using this disc, or the programs and data on it. We advise that you consult your network administrator before installing software on a networked Mac.

Coverdisc problems
If you are having difficulties using the *MacFormat* disc interface or its content, please visit our reader support website at **www.futurenet.co.uk/support/**. On this regularly updated website, you'll find solutions to numerous commonly reported problems. If, after reading these, you are still experiencing difficulties, then please email our reader support team (**support@futurenet.co.uk**) or phone **01225 442244** and ask for coverdisc support.

Please note that we can only provide technical support for the installation of software. Unfortunately, we cannot give in-depth help on the applications, or on your hardware or operating system. For software support-related issues, please contact the relevant product's developers. We are unable to provide serial numbers over the phone.

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Inter
- Int e requires OS X.
- Som ograms may require free r ration over the internet or pho
- Some so re may not be available in all territ s.
- Where relevant, program values quoted are prices when sold with original packaging and manuals.

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DVD ROM
Made in the EU
MAC197 DISC

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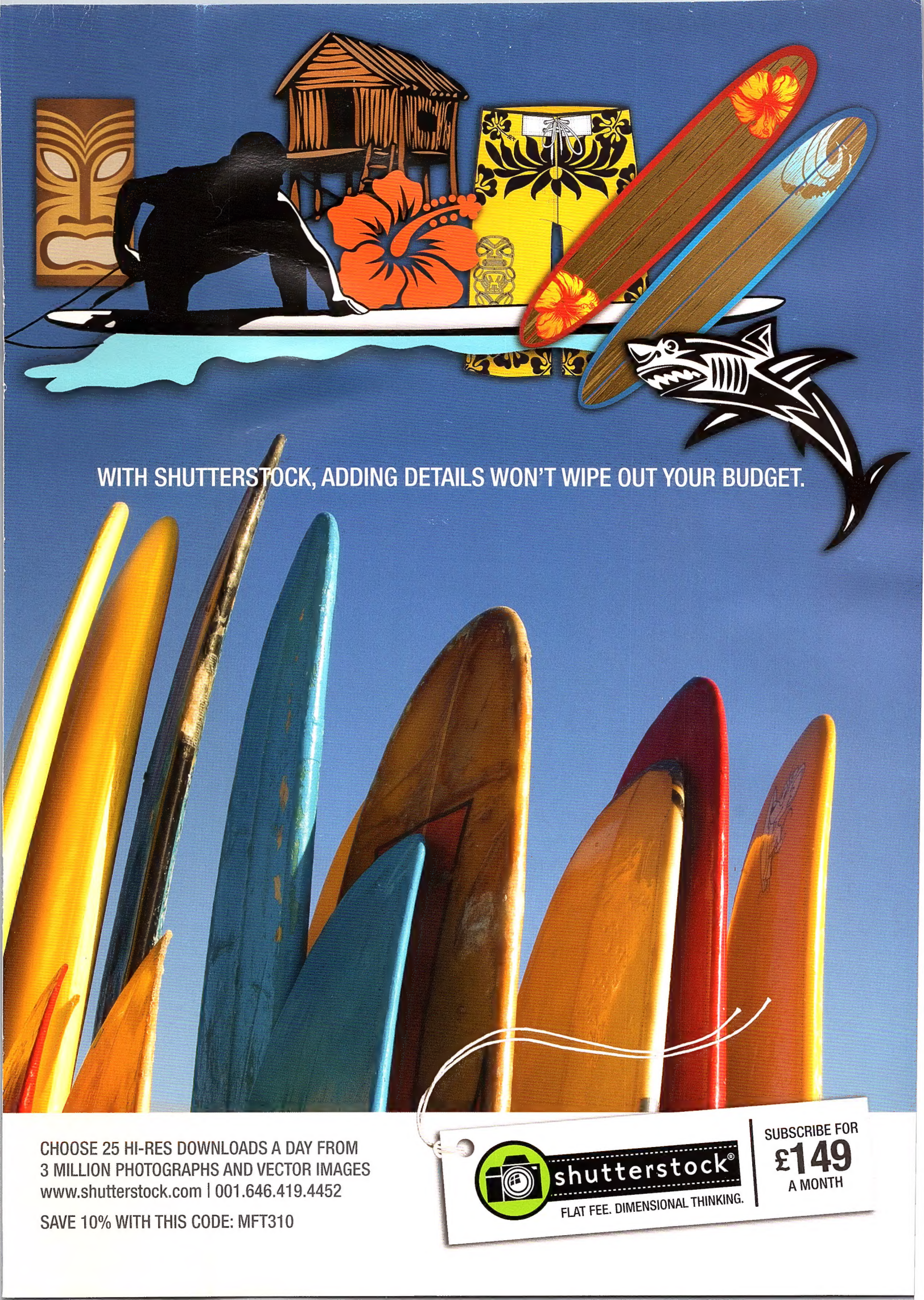
YOUR DISC ARTWORK
If you'd like to download the artwork for this disc, visit **www.macformat.co.uk**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TrustedReviews.com TR EDITOR'S CHOICE

B&W has managed to produce an iPod speaker dock that raises the bar so high, I doubt that the competition can see it, let alone reach it.

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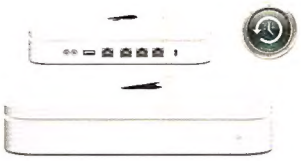
Unison IXT iPod speaker & dock solution

Meet the Unison i-XT iPod Speaker System, a 2.1 design which features two dual-dome speakers and a dedicated subwoofer; producing excellent sound quality with a level of clarity and definition often lacking in most iPod speaker systems. Comes with an iPod dock and a remote control. (shown here without speaker grill) £149.99 inc. vat



Time Capsule
A wireless hard drive that works seamlessly with Time Machine in Mac OS X Leopard. Also a full-featured 802.11n Wi-Fi base station for wireless internet.
Time Capsule 500GB £199.00 inc. vat
Time Capsule 1TB (1000GB) £329.00 inc. vat

G-Tech G-DriveQ
FireWire 400/800, USB2, eSATA
500GbB £163.33 inc. vat
750GB £254.98 inc. vat
1TB £333.70 inc. vat

G-Tech G-RAID2
FireWire 400/800, USB2
500GB £212.68 inc. vat
1TB £304.33 inc. vat
2TB £668.58 inc. vat

iTrip FM auto for your car
Now with smart scan. Simply the best FM iPod radio transmitter solution available.
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Cerulean bluetooth adaptor
Wireless iPod speakers are easy with this iSkin bluetooth transmitter/receiver. Features USB, iPod dock and Jack connections.
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